■ Business / B1
Ad valorem tax on 'sin' products backed

■ World / A8
Thai bird flu case fans human link fear

■ Metro / A19
Special food lanes for veggie trucks

■ Across / A15
3 RP women enslaved in Sabah return

■ Entertainment / A7
OMB not anti-Muslim, says Edu

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Early gov't recirement plan backed, whacked

By Christine O. Avendaño and Cynthia D. Balana

TWO SENATORS are supporting a proposed P50-billion early retirement program for government employees, but the head of a militant government workers' group is denouncing the plan as "really unworkable."

PAGE A-17

DepEd blinks, to correct errors in history book

By Rose Pastores and Cynthia D. Balana

THEY will now not sell out read.

Education officials announced a change of heart yesterday after a storm of criticism over

PAGE A-11

All-time low: P56.45-$1

By Doris C. Dumlao and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PESO slid back yesterday to its historic low of 56.45 to the dollar on heavy corporate demand, pressure from skyrocketing oil prices and new regional currency worries. It had closed at P56.38 on Friday.

The last time the peso hit the 56.45 level was on March 22 due largely to concerns on dwindling foreign exchange reserves of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. But it closed at 56.42.

Citigroup, the leading American financial services firm, expects the peso to weaken to 56.75 against the dollar by next month. It expects the peso to plunge to 57.50 by March and to 57.85 by September next year.

In its economic and market analysis of Asia Pacific economies dated Sept. 23, Citigroup attributed its negative outlook for the peso-dollar rate to the following trade deficit and to the "accelerated outlook" for the country's dominant export—electronics.

"Trade deficit for the seven months to July of $1.51 billion has exceeded our full-year expectations of a deficit of $807 million," Citigroup said. "Softening electronic imports tracked a disappointing 5.2 percent year-on-year in electronic exports to the global electronic-outlook moderation."

Also, banning its 76 by next month, Citigroup expects the peso to strengthen to 56 to the dollar in the fourth quarter because of remittances from overseas Filipino workers.

ALL TIME HIGH

NPA hand seen in killing of ex-rebel

By Christine N. Esguerra and Juliet Labog-Javellana

IT LOOKS like enemy of what communist rebels call "revolutionary justice."

The guy that killed bookstore builder leader Arturo Tolosa in a Quezon City parking lot was suspected to have had to the killing of two other former comrades, rebels, and the assassination was carried out with the same deadly surveillance.

Those were the initial findings of police looking into Tolosa's murder and Maka-alang itself and yesterday the slain leader of the Rebolusyonaryong Partidong Manggagawa-Pilipinas (could have been shot by his former comrades.

Recent told the Inquirer that on 10th year had long been looking for Tolosa to arrest him and bring him before a "people's court" for trial, and that the unit could have approached Tolosa to serve him the summons.

"But instead of submitting peacefully he opted to fight to resist arrest," Rosal said. "The NPA unit could have just detained themselves. That's impossible scenario. I don't know. I'm still checking reports from the leaders of the NPA."

Jesus Secretary Ignacio Bacani said the Philippine National Police must investigate all angles to solve the case, in previous cases involving the killing of former rebel leaders.

"The cases may be the result of internal conflicts within the revolutionary left, but nevertheless they are a travesty of justice," Bacani said.

He said measures were being taken to ensure the safety of former rebels "who have returned to the fold [of the law]."

PAGE A-10

TIGBAO could have ordered NPA "arrest," according to CPP spokesperson Gregorio Rosal.

Enrile favors amnesty for mutineers

By Christine O. Avendaño and TJ Burgonio

DAILY, it from a new accused of plotting against two presidents.

Opposition Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile yesterday helped clear the granting of amnesty to rebel soldiers involved in the 1987 Oakwood mutiny, signifying support even for those now facing the most serious coup charges.

"The best antidote to military adventurism is good governance," Enrile told reporters.

"Introduce justice in your (of your society) a clean and good government to allay greed," he said. "But when society is not well-ordered and the government is inadequate, I think we must resort to [better justice to counter political force."

Enrile then challenged the Senate in 1986 when then President Ferdinand Marcos accused him and the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) of plotting against his regime. He heralded the "people power" revolt that ousted the dictator.

PAGE A-10

'Condom king' undaunted by Church stand

By Blanche S. Rivera

DAILY from Thailand's "condom king", the contraceptive device will help Filipinos any other."

That Sen. Mechai Viravaidya is in town to promote the advocacy which earned him the moniker of country's charming HIV/AIDS infection rate.

Speaking at a forum in Makati City yesterday, Mechai urged Filipinos to use condoms despite of directions to the contrary from the conservative Catholic Church.

"Any real church ... will back up what I'm doing because I'm trying to save lives," Mechai said.

In the almost three decades that he has been promoting the use of condoms, Mechai claimed, not one religious group had tried to stop him, so declared that he was on the wrong track.

The Catholic Church in the Philippines strongly lobbies against the use of artificial contraceptives, and maintains that condoms do not really offer effective protection from sexually transmitted diseases.

Mechai obviously knows this, but was undaunted. "I'll fight any religion that tries to stop me ... I respect all religions as long as they are not silly or crazy points," he said, claiming laughter from his audience.

The Thai official was in charge of tourism, sports, information and AIDS prevention under the Prime Minister's Office in 1991-92. He headed the Population and Community Development Association based in Bangkok, and was ambassador to UNAIDS. Ignoz United Nations program on HIV/AIDS.

He was brought to Manila by UNAIDS, the AIDS Society of the Philippines, Path Foundation and Global Fund-AIDS, Philippines.

In his country, he is famous for giving away condoms wherever he goes—restaurants, public transport, schools, government offices, gas stations, night clubs and rural villages.

"The Philippines doesn't think it has to spend HIV/AIDS numbers than Thailand, and that may be true," Mechai said. "But how to

CONTINUED A-17

MECHAI UNAIDS ambassador

Indons make most of porous RP border

A PHILIPPINE Coast Guard officer searches the sea off Sibu, South Celebes, for foreign intruders amid reports of terrorist Islamist operations currently entering Mindanao for training.

RAP shows areas of border patrol operations in the sea separating Mindanao and North Sulawesi.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2004

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Graft raps filed vs GSIS chief

By Cynthia G. Balana and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

A PARTY-LIST congressman yesterday led government service insurance system officials and pension fund owners represented by Courage, a non-government organization, to filing graft charges against GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia in the Office of the Ombudsman.

At the same time, Rep. Crispin Beltran (party-list, Anakpawis) filed House Resolution No. 1018 calling for a congressional investigation in to alleged unfair labor practices by Garcia against the GSIS union.

The graft case against Garcia stems for unliquidated cash advances totalling P1.5 million, the purchase by the GSIS of paintings amounting to tens of millions of pesos, and the P1 billion agreement with Union Bank for an "e-Card" project that is being opposed by retirees and pensioners who have difficulty using automatic teller machines (ATM).

Beltran said the latest deal was being questioned by Courage and allied people's organizations because Union Bank is controlled by the Abcede Group which is alleged by bad business links to Garcia.

The law provides that the money of trust funds like the GSIS should be placed only in government securities, specifically cash or Landbank and Development Bank of the Philippines.

Beltran said that aside from mismanaging the GSIS and "rewarding" millions of pesos on players of their cyclical benefits, Garcia was a "notorious violator" of employees' rights.

He said Garcia had issued a board resolution slashing the salaries of rank-and-file employees by 14 percent purportedly as the GSIS' contribution to the national government's efforts to stem the fiscal crisis.

But he said, Garcia branded the complaints filed against him before Beltran et al, as "unruly labor, lawless and malicious."

In a statement issued prior to the complaint, Garcia said the complainants were part of a "sinister plot" by "unmoored parties" to oust him "because of his outstanding performance and unrelenting determination to fully protect and promote the interests of the 1.5 million GSIS members by stopping illegal and immoral practices that deprive the GSIS of huge income revenues."

Garcia said he welcomed the probe because, "I will definitely expose the evil masterminds of those who filed the complaint. I will also show that under my administration, the GSIS has been able to multiply its income by leaps and financial standing, enabling it to fully respond to the needs of its member-constituents, including the pensioners."

Beltran said some of the complaints against Garcia before the Ombudsman and the Civil Service Commission had prospered because the latter "enjoys the protection of Malacañang."

But the Palace has left it to the Department of Finance to decide whether or not to keep Garcia.

MEMBERS of different militant groups demand ouster of GSIS Chief Winston Garcia in a press conference Monday.

In a TV interview, President Macapagal-Arroyo said: "I told him [Garcia] not to explain to me but to the Filipino people, for as usual, who the public will believe in his issues."

The President said she would not intervene because, "I am the appointing authority and I want to wait for his explanation because I don't want the other side to say that I am protecting GSIS and SSCEs [government-owned and -controlled corporations] as a form of harassment of those that do not get services."

The President was apparently referring to Garcia's report that one of the reasons he was being attacked was that he had denied a request for a retirement contract from a congressman.

In a radio interview, Peza Secretary Ignacio Bunye said, "The BIR is under the DOF [which] is currently reviewing the management and operations of all government financial institutions. He don't want to jump the gun on its review."

The DOF, however, refused to comment on the issue.

Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong on a visit to Seoul said those allowed to label foreign investors as the Philippines nonsense.

Finance Undersecretary Renee Ocampo, who is officer in charge in Amatong's absence, said she did not want to comment on the matter until she had received a formal order from Malacañang telling the DOF to decide Garcia's fate. With AMLA Bunso

Winston get P2.1-M GSIS loan in hours

By Norman Bordadora

PHOENIXIZED all by no lately.

A party-list group yesterday accused Government for the Insurance System president and general manager Winston Garcia for securing a P2.1-million loan on the same day [June 10] that he filed his application, or in less many hard members were getting their salary loans in two weeks at the earliest.

"I could have gotten it in four hours just like all the other GSIS members whose records and premium payments were in order," Garcia retorted.

Garcia said the controversies of the GSIS had made it so efficient that it could comply with President Macapagal-Arroyo's directive to process salary loan in as quickly as four hours and retirement and other claims in eight hours.

"If the members don't get their loans so fast, it must be that they have yet to update their premium payments or the government agencies they belong to had failed to remit their premiums," Garcia said.

And what did he do with the money he borrowed? Garcia admitted he bought a Volvo.

Gov't still has to recover P2.9B invested in Smokey project, says Miriam

By Michael Lim Ubac

SEN. MIRIAM Defensor Santiago yesterday said that the government still had not recovered from the P2.9-billion liabilities of the Smokey Mountain Development and Reclamation Project (SMDRP).

Santiago complained that the P2.9-billion investments of the Social Security System, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, Pag-Ibig Fund, Land Transportation Office, Government Service Insurance System, Landbank and the Philippine National Bank had not been recovered. She said no other they matured.

"The national government is committed to the Bubble Gang for ten years," she said. "It'll be 10 years in 2005 and we have not recovered a single centavo from the Bubble Gang," she said.

Bubble Gang, she said most of the 19 hectares of reclaimed land for PD 20 billion that failed to redeem the debt loan amount could through the Smokey Mountain Asset Pool.

Santiago hit back at former National Investment Commissioner Lucasyer Vicente Cheto, legal counsel and spokesperson of SLB Builders, for claiming that there was nothing irregular in the project because the technical study were still in the name of the National Housing Authority (NHA).

"That is only half the truth," she said, "the fact is the titles were eventually transferred to S. B. Builders, which was granted the exclusive rights to sell the lands under the Smokey Mountain Asset Pool agreement."

And while it was true that S.B. Builders had failed to redeem the lands, "the funds infused by government financial institutions were nearly three times what S.B. Builders had put in," she added.

Santiago also pointed out that the mortgages and the deed of trust up therein appear "on paper only because the certificates bought by the GSIS have not been redeemed until now."

She explained that under the termination agreement signed last year by the NHA and S. B. Builders, the Home Guaranty Insurance Corp. agreed to pay the certificates of title to the investors, which could total up to P2 billion already.

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			Updates in Constitutional & Election Laws – 4:30 pm – 6:30pm (2 hrs)	Justice Rogelio L. Mesmborg
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			International Humanitarian Conventions – 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm (2 hrs)	Dean Custodio O. Parlade
4th Quarter 2004	3 hrs. Ethics	Oct. 16, 2004	Administrative Law & Agrarian Reform – 8:30 am (3 hrs)	Prof. Maria C. Valdecantos
			RULE Practice Rules on Electronic Evidence – 10:45 am – 12:45pm (2hrs)	Atty. Jose John F. Fu
			Updates in Legal Ethics – 2 pm (1 hr)	Justice Hector L. Hofilena
			Updates in Labor Law – 3:15 pm – 4:15 pm (2 hrs)	Dean Froilan M. Bacungan
4th Quarter 2004	3 hrs. Ethics	Oct. 23, 2004	Legal Writing – 8:30 am (3 hrs)	Justice Hugo E. Gutierrez, Jr.
			Civil Procedure Law Advocacy – 10:45 am – 12:45 pm (2 hrs)	Prof. Harry L. Hope, Jr.
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GMA tells Customs chief: Go get the big smugglers

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

A NEW anti-smuggling czar is born.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered Customs Commissioner Jorge Joreta to "go after the big smugglers" and not the small fry and gave him "broad powers" to be tough anew on intensified anti-smuggling.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the President told the Bureau of Customs to step up its campaign against smuggling, one of the worst crimes in the government's revenue collection.

The government is looking to overcome a projected P200-billion budget deficit, prompting the President to ask for eight new taxes and to whip revenue agencies to drum up more additional revenues.

"The President wants Customs to really get at it (smuggling) hammer and tongs. She wants the commissioner to prepare an OB [order of battle] against smugglers similar to the OB for kidnappers and drug lords," Bunye said.

"The idea is to identify those alleged smugglers and to make up with an action plan to bring them to justice," he said.

Joreta recently submitted to the President a list of 112 people that pool with customs executives of customs laws. Some of the most prominent personalities linked to big-time smuggling in the country are on the list.

As the President assessed the performance of all top collectors in a command conference at Malacañang yesterday afternoon, she issued Executive Order 303 giving the customs commissioner the powers of the defunct Task Force Intelligence and Investigation Bureau.

This would give him Joreta "almost similar powers" against smuggling, not just limited to the customs area.

The EIIB was previously empowered to combat smuggling but it was abolished during the Estrada administration.

The Arroyo did not revive the EIIB but vested it with its powers.

As the new anti-smuggling czar, Joreta can:

- Prepare and implement appropriate and effective measures to prevent and suppress all forms of smuggling especially rice, sugar, textiles, vehicles, alcohol and dangerous drugs.
- Effect searches, seizures and arrests on smuggling cases or apply for a judicial warrant as may be necessary.
- Investigate, file and prosecute criminal, civil and administrative cases against smugglers.
- Enlist the assistance of any department, bureau, office, agency or instrumentality of the government, including government-owned or -controlled corporations to carry out its personnel, facilities and resources.
- And perform such other functions and carry out activities as may be directed by the President.

PRESIDENT Arroyo receives a copy of the criminal cases filed by the Bureau of Customs from the new anti-smuggling czar Customs Commissioner Jorge Joreta, during the Customs Command conference at Malacañang Palace Monday.

'WORST-CASE SCENARIO'

Evacuation of 4,000 Pinoys in Iraq ruled out

By TJ Burgonio

ACTING Foreign Secretary Jose Brillantes yesterday allayed growing fears for the safety of the 4,000 Filipinos working in Iraq, saying the volatile situation in the war-torn state did not necessitate their evacuation just yet.

Brillantes, the current undersecretary for migrant workers affairs, ruled out the possibility the stepped-up attacks by Iraqi insurgents against the US-led international coalition would degenerate into civil war.

"Evacuation is a worst-case scenario. This is very remote. We just have to be ready for all eventualities," Brillantes told reporters in a chance interview.

"How can there be civil war when the US forces are there?" he added.

United States officials had predicted that Iraqi insurgents would step up their attacks in the run-up to the Australian elections next month, the US presidential elections in November and the Iraqi elections in January next year.

The accelerated hostilities had worried Philippine officials, prompting them to advise the embassy staff in Baghdad to restrict their movements and to update contingency measures for the Filipino workers.

Brillantes, however, said the government was prepared to repatriate any of the 4,000 Filipinos working in two US military camps—Anaconda and Victory—if a request was made.

"In situations like this, (repatriation) comes to mind until things die down," he said, recalling that several months ago, some 600 workers had asked to be repatriated but only 200 eventually decided to come home.

Ambassador Roy Cimatu, special envoy to the Middle East, was set to depart for Iraq to visit the two camps and assess the situation there in the face of the accelerated hostilities in the past few days.

"Cimatu should be on the way to Iraq to make a fresh personal assessment of the situation," Brillantes said.

"At this time, [Charge d'Affaires in Baghdad] Ricardo Endaya is probably making his own assessment and is getting in touch with as many Filipinos as he can. He has the list of all [the Filipinos] in Iraq," he said.

In view of the heightened alert, the embassy has embarked on a massive campaign to inform the Filipino workers to be prepared for "any eventuality" and to take safety precautions even while inside the camps.

"They will know what to do depending on the alert," Brillantes said.

The foreign affairs department is also preparing safety manuals for distribution to the workers there, he said.

US unfazed by GMA China trip

By TJ Burgonio

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to make her first visit to China after the May presidential elections did not worry the US government at all, US Embassy Charge d'Affaires Joseph Mussomeli said.

The President's three-day state visit to China early this month had been viewed as a posturing by the Philippines which had been roundly criticized by the United States for withdrawing its token humanitarian contingent in Iraq in July.

Manila pulled out its contingent to meet the demand of Iraqi militants who snatched and threatened to behead Filipino truck driver Angelo dela Cruz.

Mussomeli, who toured a museum in Cavite on Saturday along with some members of the embassy staff, said that the US government felt "it was good" for Ms Arroyo to visit one of its "important neighbors" in Asia.

"China is an important country in this region, and it would really be narrow-minded or shortsighted for either the Philippines or the [US] to not want that sort of interplay between the countries," he said in an interview after the tour.

Mussomeli, who arrived in Manila more than a week ago, said it was crucial for any country to hold talks with its "next-door neighbors" and thresh out any dispute brought about by their geographic closeness.

"There's always friction if you're too close to each other. It's important to talk; it's important to visit and to work out these problems," he said. "Yeah, it's a good thing. We don't worry about it."

The Philippines and China, along with Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan, are laying claims to the Spratly islands off South China Sea, which are believed to be sitting on vast oil and gas reserves.

In a bid to turn it into an "area of cooperation," Manila and Beijing hammered out an agreement to mount a three-year, $7-million seismic survey around the Spratlys for potential oil and gas reserves during the state visit.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo had repeatedly defended the visit, saying that Ms Arroyo recognizes the determining influence of China, together with the US and Japan, on the country's security and economic situation.

This recognition, he said, was part of the President's foreign policy.

Echoing assurances by Washington officials, Mussomeli said that the two countries remain "close allies" despite their "serious disagreement" over the troops' pullout from Baghdad.

"Things really aren't bad now. Even close allies, even close friends disagree on some things. And I don't want to say it wasn't a serious disagreement, it was. Even if I have disagreements with my wife, with God, we don't turn our backs on each other," he said.

Our salvation lies 'neath our feet–JDV

By Carlito Pablo

THE COUNTRY'S salvation from its enormous debt could be found in what lies beneath—the country's untapped mineral resources.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. pointed this out as he called for the revival of the mining industry in line with his proposed 12-point program to "create new wealth."

"The country's mineral wealth is estimated between $800 billion to $1 trillion, as against the current Philippine external debt of $57 billion," he said.

The development of the mining industry has been hampered by lack of capital, a situation significantly attributed to the current constitutional limitations on foreign equity participation in such fields as mineral development.

"A policy decision to rebuild the industry would open its enormous economic potential, employ thousands of people and create the beginnings of a tiger economy for the country," De Venecia said.

He added that countries like the United States, Canada, Australia and China could become "major players in the revived Philippine mining industry."

As part of this mining initiative, De Venecia said international and local investors could be mobilized to develop the "enormous underground wealth" at Mt. Diwalwal in Davao.

"International mining companies can develop the area and employ thousands of miners currently operating there, who might be given the additional incentive of partnership or profit-sharing arrangements," he said.

The revival of the mining industry top-billed the 12-point program submitted by De Venecia to President Macapagal-Arroyo in a letter dated Sept. 23, 2004.

"It seeks to build an economic superstructure to sustain the continuing gains from Your Excellency's 10-point program," De Venecia told President Macapagal.

The other components of the De Venecia plan are:

- Development of more oil and gas wells like the Malampaya oil and gas field in offshore Palawan;
- The launch of massive reclamation projects for auction;
- Reforestation to generate revenues from wood exports;
- Promotion of the tourism industry;
- The creation of a housing and infrastructure program;
- Development and enlargement of the information technology sector;
- Reform in property rights to unleash the poor's economic potential;
- The creation of Hong Kong-type enclaves starting with 10,000 hectares in Clark and Subic, and
- Development of a new generation of farmers and fishermen with a large-scale program for non-traditional, high-value crops in farms and fisheries.

In a statement, former peasant leader and now Rep. Rafael Mariano (party-list Anakpawis) warned that the De Venecia program is "one big sell-out of the country's patrimony."

Mariano said that multinational corporations would become the main benefactors of the program.

Chinese detained for estafa

By Jerome Aning

THE BUREAU of Immigration yesterday detained a Chinese national who was intercepted a week ago at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport while trying to flee the country to evade prosecution for large-scale estafa.

Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. said Li Dong Yang and four companions were placed on the bureau's watch list at the request of the National Bureau of Investigation.

Yang was arrested at the NAIA by NBI agents on Sept. 21 as he was about to board a Cathay Pacific flight to Hong Kong. The NBI turned over Li to the immigration office yesterday.

The four other Chinese suspects, who are still at large, are all officers of the Passengers & Cargo Sales Co. Ltd based in Fujian, China.

The case against the suspects stemmed from a complaint filed with the NBI by the Triple Eight International Travel and Tours Inc., which accused the five of reneging on their agreement for the sale of chartered plane tickets to passengers traveling from China to the Philippines and vice versa.

Reenacted budget looms anew

By Carlos Pobo

CAN THE reenacted 2004 national budget be reenacted a second time for 2005?

Rep. Edcel Lagman (Albay, 4th dist.) yesterday warned that such a move would be open to constitutional challenge amid indications the 2004 budget may be reenacted next year.

Lagman, a member of the House appropriations committee, said that while the 1987 Constitution did not expressly prohibit a second reenactment, the framers's language and intent "can sustain (the) position that there can only be one reenactment."

A hitch in deliberations in the Congressional Budget and Management, Lagman said this was because what the Constitution referred to for reenactment was the "general appropriations law for the preceding fiscal year as submitted by the executive."

"Consequently, only two years are reenactments...the immediately preceding fiscal year and the ensuing fiscal year," Lagman said.

The national budget for 1990 was reenacted in 2004 when Congress failed to pass the general appropriations bill for the latter year on time.

"The constitutional directive implicitly prohibits double or multiple reenactments of the general appropriations law," Lagman said.

Over the weekend, however, the chair of the House committee on appropriations ruled out a reenacted budget for 2005.

"The House is on track to pass the proposed P906.7 billion 2005 national budget before Dec. 31," said committee chair Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. (LP, Camarines Sur).

There is speculation Congress will not be able to complete its deliberations on the 2005 budget after the lawmakers decided to implement line-item budgeting in the appropriations bill, a process that is more tedious than the current practice of making lump-sum appropriations.

Line-item budgeting entails going over each appropriated expenditure "item by item" as opposed to the lump-sum system where an amount is appropriated for a project without going into the details of the expenditures.

Previously, the House wrapped up its budget deliberations before the end of the year and sent its appropriations bill to the Senate, which has its own version of the bill, for approval.

Representatives of the two chambers then meet once a bicameral conference to reconcile the differences in their respective budget proposals.

Andaya said the common sense is that the country must have a new budget agreed to by the end of before Dec. 31.

But he noted that, "In the last 10 years, only six general appropriations laws were signed into law before the both rolled to the new year."

Kapatiran: Party of good guys banks on Divine plan

By Rob Cuaresma

PACHECO

PERHAPS the Commission on Elections finally accredited the alliance for the Common Good or "ang Kapatiran" as a political party, it only had two days to campaign before the May 10 elections.

But Eduardo "Danding" Pacheco, should have prepared, after all, Kapatiran had filed its application months in advance, but Comelec only granted the group its 1-SEC-Budget political party on May 8, 2004.

Pacheco, founder of the Iglesia Ng Diyos Movement and a staunch campaigner for the abolition of the pork barrel, believed that Kapatiran's failure to get its spot in the list did not rest part of some Divine plan.

"I think God had a purpose," he said in a speech delivered in front of the Filipino fast food, "God did not want Kapatiran to take part in the last dirty elections.

"I think God wanted Kapatiran to complete the so-called building of a Muslim Ark, which is a group of good men ran for the social and political transformation of the country," he said.

Pacheco saw "unambiguous servant-leaders" who seek to join his political party in time for the next elections.

"We want to find out how many we are," he said. "If everyone here is registering about the current situation, then you should do something about it."

Aside from his bad experience in August 2002, Pacheco had styled the group as an alternative political vehicle for "ordinary citizens, who could no longer sit idly by while they see the betrayal of public trust by elected and appointed public officials."

Kapatiran, he said, was meant to be "the antidote to the politics of pork barrel and the politics of celebrity or personality; the politics of deception, hypocrisy, dishonesty, patronage, pay-off and immoral compromises; the politics of guns, goons and gold."

The group's disapproval of, among other things, partisan politicking that advertise the accomplishments of elected officials, as well as the practice of some public officials who pursue careers in the media or entertainment.

Gochoco; 75

TERESITA A. Gochoco died on Sept. 25, at the age of 75. She is survived by her husband, Joaquin; children and in-laws Ann and Benjy Sterry, Jimmy and Vivian, Tessa and Chet Wampler, and Hilda; grandchildren, Wesley, Carlos, Megan, Samantha, Kelly, Erica, Christopher and Jacqueline. Her wishes were brought home after a one-day wake at the Philinter chapel in Quezon City on Sunday.

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The Daily Gospel

Tuesday, September 28, 2004
26th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Job 3:1-3, 11-17, 20-23
Gospel: Lk 9:51-56

As the time drew near when Jesus would be taken up to heaven, he made up his mind to go to Jerusalem. He had sent ahead of him some messengers who entered a Samaritan village to prepare a lodging for him. But the people there refused to receive him because he was on his way to Jerusalem. Seeing this, James and John, his disciples said, "Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to reduce them to ashes?" Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they went over to another village.

Commentary

There was once a great saint to be numbered among the saints, always giving thanks to God, "Thank you, Lord, you always give me everything we need!" Some people were amazed at his liberality and took to considering him a fool. They would tell him he had another idea coming if they were ever like they were given anything to eat, and they were turned from every door when they asked for lodging. But the saint continued, "Thank you, Lord, you always give us everything we need!" Now this (but please no harm) also came to pass one day: nothing, not the bit more continued, "Thank you, Lord, thank you..." This was too much for one of his disciples, and he said, "Master, you noticed what for who pass three days the Lord has given us nothing!" "Tell him," said the old man, "it must be that we needed three days of hunger and poverty. Thank you, Lord, you always give us everything we need."

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Supreme Court Doctrines

LABOR LAW (TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT)—Purpose of Articles 280 and 286 of the Labor Code—Article 280 of the Labor Code of the Philippines was established to curb certain bodily [illegible] this circumvention by unscrupulous employers of the employee's rights to be secure tenure without unnecessarily and completely ceding can all workers and civil governments to manage or hire employees on a casual or temporary basis for as long as it is convenient or to interfere with Article 281 of the Labor Code. Article 280 was designed to put an end to the practice of employers avoiding permanency clauses of contracts by employing workers on a casual or contracting to them temporary or probationary appointments, ad infinitum. [Continues in next col.] Honda Office, Inc. Second Division, Philippine Automotive (Phil.), Inc. vs. Pedigacio G. R. No. 146717, [illegible]

HK links probed in secret lab bust

THE GOVERNMENT is investigating possible links between Hong Kong drug syndicates and nine Filipinos arrested in a US$ hundred mid-for-ice lab allegedly running a huge secret drug lab, officials said yesterday.

Anti-narcotics officials said they have asked their Hong Kong counterparts to investigate information, indicating that the four Chinese, two Taiwanese, two Malaysians and a Hong Kong resident, were working in the former British colony.

Two Filipinos also were arrested in the raid on Friday in Shenzhen City. The raid was staged in coordination with the US Drug Enforcement Administration, said Aurelino Arevalo, head of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency.

Police seized 67% kilograms of methamphetamine worth P1.3 billion.

Arevalo said there were enough chemicals in the lab to produce another 7.5 tons of methamphetamine hydrochloride, locally called "shabu," worth P15 billion.

The foreigners would be charged with importing and manufacturing illegal drugs, a crime punishable by death, he said. AP

Gov't launches 'English' tours

By Jeremaine Arong

THE Philippines and learn English.

The Department of Tourism has launched Philippines ESL (English as a Second Language) Tour Program, which hopes to lure Chinese, Japanese, South Koreans and Taiwanese tourists who also want to learn English as a language.

"The DOT has developed tours combining English language courses with holiday and vacation activities," said Tourism Undersecretary Evelyn Farrag. "It provides student visitors opportunities for cultural immersion, thereby enhancing their appreciation and understanding of Filipino culture."

The Philippines has an advantage over other Asian countries as an alternative destination for the study of English because 90.5 percent of the Filipinos can speak and understand the language.

Farrag led government officials in signing the memorandum of agreement for the program at the DOT office in Manila. The other signatories were Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Jose Brillantes, Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez and Deputy Director General Santiago Elliot Jr. of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

Participants may enroll in the following basic English: Philippine Holiday tour packages; The "Homestay Program" allows a student tourist to live with a Filipino family for the duration of his lessons; The "Self-Serve English Trip" is conducted on a bus cruise where students study with cultural and leisure components.

The "Learn English Camps" is an outdoor camp-style activity which integrates sessions on the study of the English language. The "English on the Road" offers day tours or three-day, two-night trips by land with The basic English language learning module interwoven during the road trip.

Foreign tourists who wish to enroll in a non-degree course for less than a year are required to secure a special study permit from the Bureau of Immigration upon arrival in the Philippines. Foreign ESL students may refer to the DFA website, www.dfa.gov.ph, for entry requirements, visa extension, visa per module and application.

NPA hand seen in killing of ex-rebel

ARTURO Tabara's nephew Cecil and his wife Cza view the body of the slain rebel leader in a funeral parlor in Quezon City

'A partner not only in love but also in fight for justice'

By Edson Caoire Tordoc Jr.

SAID EMBRACED her youngest daughter and told her to be strong.

Weeping Tabara, 58, and daughters Rose, Sunsun, Saul jun and Gil found the corpse where the body of assassinated former rebel leader Arturo Tabara had lain. The daughter told Saul to get his mother's arms.

Weeping, they knelt but, for husband had died a not giving up the fight.

"(She death) should never discourage the fight for social justice but serve as an inspiration in these times of crisis," she said in person yesterday morning.

Her husband Arturo, 53, and Stephen Ong, 38, the boyfriend of their daughter, were assassinated in Quezon City the other night.

Arturo was the chair of the commercial breakaway group Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB).

Ong was a business management student at Silliman University. He would have graduated next year, his father said Saturday.

Weeping with Arturo and daughter stepped before the press. They were about to buy a plate (short for Stephen, who was called) and to entertain Batangueño City.

From page A1

Tabara, leader of a faction that broke away from the CPP in 1992, and Ong, the boyfriend of his daughter, were shot dead in the parking lot of SM Novaliches.

Tabara was secretary general of the CPP Bicolano rebel band the RPA-P in 1985—which linked up with the urban commando hit squad Alex Boncayao Brigade in 1987. The group forged a peace deal with then President Joseph Estrada in 1999.

Police investigators showed that the killer had walked up to Tabara, pumped bullets into his vital points, and didn't leave until he was sure he was dead.

All is Quezon City

Director Avelino Razon Jr., chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, and investigators were looking into possible motives behind the Saturday night killing and those of other ex-CPP leaders, Filemon "Popoy" Lagman (killed in 2001) and Romulo "Rolly" Kintanar (killed in 2003).

But three members all centered in Quezon City.

"The incidents have the signature of the NPA," Razon said. "That's why we're looking for commonalities among the three cases."

But he said he not discount tangential angles, such as the possibility that the killing was the result of a personal grudge," he added.

PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay formed a task force to investigate Tabara's killing and that of another Lagman and Kintanar assassinations. He said investigators already had significant leads.

Tabara, 53, was shot twice—in the nape and chest. Ong, 38, took three shots in the head.

Victims not armed

The killer or killers shot them at close range as the two victims slept in their cars Tuesday from 4AM.

Tabara and Ong were not armed, Razon said.

Recovered from the crime scene was five spent shells of a .45-cal. pistol, the same gun type used in the killing of Lagman and Kintanar.

PNP police spokesperson chief Insp. Robert Dizon said Tabara had been on the NPA hit list since he broke away from the communist movement.

"He was warned not to come

From page A1

"Then dropped me off at the entrance [to the SM Baraoas mall] and they looked for parking space. Suddenly, there was a commotion. I felt something was wrong. I called their cell phones but they were not answering," Bautista said.

The family knew that some people were after Arturo.

Veronica said they feared that her husband had been included in the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army order of battle.

"That meant they would punish him with death," Veronica said.

She described her husband as her "partner not only in love but also in the fight for social justice."

A few years ago, the couple became reunited to continue the struggle through peaceful means, its new group had since become involved in peace talks with the government.

The assassination left a 6-day-old baby to grow up without a father. Then Aurora had just given birth last week.

"If they will have a boss, they should check whether or not the killer was help in the search for social justice," Veronica said.

Arturo's and Ong's remains are at the Pentecostal Tin-ao Mission Avenue, Quezon City.

Same modus operandi

Chief Supt. Jaime Caringal, former PNP Intelligence Group director, said the threat was "inherent" to Tabara's decision to break ties with Maoist rebels.

The way the same single-fire pattern had looked into in the Lagman and Kintanar killings.

Both men had also crossed ties with the CPP Lagman put up the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino, and Kintanar, lying low, worked as a security consultant at the Bureau of Immigration.

Two weeks ago, a senior police official told the Inquirer that the PNP had already identified the assailants of Lagman and Kintanar.

"We even found that the same pistol was used in both murders," the official said.

Noted, interviewed on his mobile phone, alleged that Tabara had mysterious shooting internal offenders "against the people of Negros and Bicol and the whole (rebel) movement.

Arrest and dangerous

"Sometimes, NPA units from the countryside send their partisan unit to arrest an individual during (danger) before the people's court," Rodriguez said. "Maybe, the rape murders happened in such an irregular units in the province," Rosal said.

If the killing was really a rebel job, the NPA unit might have been pushed to shoot Tabara after they sensed that he was "armed and dangerous," Rosal said.

He said that since leaving the CPP, Tabara had been involved in the counterinsurgency program of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"While still within the CPP-leadership, Tabara was a regular NPA Military Intelligence Group] spy. He even took many important documents of the party to the party's enemies—things to us now he was," he said.

Silo de la Cruz, another top NPA-P leader, scoffed at Rosal's claims that Tabara was a government agent or that his group had been part of the partisan army of a politician.

A rebel's conviction

"The formation of the NPA-P in 1998 and its Second Congress held this year all attest to his conviction of pursuing a revolution," De la Cruz said.

De la Cruz added: "It is common knowledge in the left-progressive community that we are, in fact, one of the peaceful, if not the poorest, the groups will show that we will never betray our unconditional principle and commitment of serving and protecting the people's interests."

He said the decision of Tabara's group to talk peace with the government was "compelled by (NPA-P's) honest reading that the present situation dictates a period of struggle for reforms so that the people may still gain victories, any sustained, in this period of revolutionary ebb."

Tabara had known that he was assigned for assassination.

"He was not afraid to die," Tabara had told the Inquirer in a telephone interview on Sept. 4, the eve of the burial of United Bicolano Tabara, commander of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-ABB, who was killed in an NPA ambush in Albay.

Tabara said the risky were part of "the road to peace," which, he said, could be elusive.

The NPA-P and its armed wing, the RPA-ABB, condemned Tabara's killing and pointed to the CPP-NPA as the one responsible.

RPA-ABB national commander Stephen Paduano, alias Comrade Lualhati, said the group would maintain its policy of "active defense." Rich reports from Marilen Danguilan and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI bureau chiefs Jaime Laurente, Nino O. Aurelio in Manila, and Nestor P. Burgos Jr. and Carlos P. Gomez, Phi Visayas Bureau

SLAIN BREAKAWAY REBELS

FOLLOWING is a list of breakaway communist leaders believed to have been killed by New People's Army comrades:

Leopoldo "Ka Hector" Mobilla, age 54. Former spokesperson of the Eastern Samar NPA Regional Command. Died dead in front of his parish church in Dolores, Eastern Samar on April 5, 1986. The NPA claimed the killing.

Eduardo "Ka Roy" Bonifacio. Aide of Mobilla and in the NPA Eastern Samar Command. Ambushed in Maslog, Eastern, in October 1986. His body was found on the 17, 1986 in Hagonoy, Laguna, with multiple bullet wounds.

Conrado "Ka Andoy" Balweg. Former priest who founded the Cordillera People's Liberation Army, which split from the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1987. Balweg died of a stroke in Bontoc, Mountain Province, on Dec. 21, 1998. The NPA claimed the killing.

Filemon "Ka Popoy" Lagman. Former head of the CPP's Manila-Rizal Regional Committee who founded the Partido Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino and the Kilusang Mayo Uno. Died on Feb. 5, 2001.

Romulo "Ka Rolly" Kintanar. Former NPA chief. Killed at a restaurant within the Bureau of Immigration compound in Intramuros on Aug. 19, 2003.

Raymundo "Johnny" Ilarina. Member of the Alliance of Progressive Labor, an affiliate of the Peasant Movement of Samar-Panay, and part of the National Democratic Front of the Eastern Visayas Regional Committee. He was killed by suspected NPA rebels in Barangay Cabugan, Jaro, Leyte, on May 27, 2003. Witnesses said four NPA members were responsible for his death, but this was denied by the CPP-NPA.

Benito Echevarria, 22, alleged organizer of the Bikolnon Command Party of the New Katipunan, and its armed wing, the Bonifacio Revolutionary Army/Alex Boncayao Brigade. Abducted in Sitio Cabog-Cabog, Barangay Mabalanoy, Pandan, Antique, on June 17, 2003. Killed on June 19, 2003.

Daniel "Ka Mateng" Sonny. Western Visayas leader of the breakaway Proletarian Revolutionary Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (PRA-ABB) and a member of the CPP-NPA on the one responsible.

RPA-ABB national commander Stephen Paduano, alias Comrade Lualhati, said the group would maintain its policy of "active defense." Rich reports from Marilen Danguilan and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI bureau chiefs Jaime Laurente, Nino O. Aurelio in Manila, and Nestor P. Burgos Jr. and Carlos P. Gomez, Phi Visayas Bureau

Enrile favors amnesty for mutineers

From page A1

A year later, Marcos' successor, Corazon Aquino, lived briefly as her vice president. Enrile became the top opposition figure who was jostled in the "feel from the Queen" intrigue against her.

Enrile was later detained on charges of rebellion compound with murder but the Supreme Court dismissed the coup-related charges. He was in such crisis in the islands' books.

A resolution asking President Macapagal-Arroyo to extend amnesty to the leaders and soldiers of the Magdalo group reached it the July 2000 Oakwood mutiny is pending before the Senate.

Sen. Alfredo Lim said he filed it on Aug. 11, or more than a month before six enlisted leaders publicly apologized to Mr. Arroyo for their actions.

The Senate Bureau of the Philippines hinted yesterday that it was not completely sold on the idea of amnesty for the mutineers.

PNP spokesperson Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero said the military would prefer to let the law take its course against the leaders of the Magdalo group.

"That's the part of the liberal bureau of the Philippines, are will stick to the principle that if there will be forgiveness, it will be (at) public," Lucero said.

Minority support

Sen.a statement. Lim said he had the support of the non-member minority bloc, which had agreed to co-sponsor his resolution calling on the government to "exercise leniency and absolute discretion" if it was to release those to call for national reconciliation.

"(The) government must demonstrate magnanimity in the face of the current political strife that divides this nation and as a manifestation of its desire for genuine national reconciliation so that its energies could be devoted on more important aspects of national progress and development," Lim said in his resolution.

Blaming the case for the rebels, Lim said the soldiers and officers had intended to blow up certain areas around the Oakwood Premier Hotel in Makati City but they did not push through with their plan. Instead, they surrendered to the authorities.

"See a single life was lost or a single drop of blood shed, even as there was no property destroyed or a single shot fired," he said.

Reforms

Lim said there would be no basis for future coups if the government undertook the necessary reforms.

"But if the government continues to corrupt itself, the (unlikely) (of another coup) arises," he said.

He added: "We're not saying that we're advocating that they (the soldiers) should take the law into their own hands. It should just be a wake-up call, which was what they (the Magdalo group) did.

"If you will compare that with the MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front), how many lost lives have they set on fire? Like the RAM coups, how many died there? Fifty-three," he said. "Why were the (previous) coup plots not granted amnesty? Pa rinat apply one more, di ba?"

Prof. Carolina Hernandez, a member of the Feliciano Commission which looked into the military takeovers of Oakwood, has said an amnesty for the mutineers would only cause more problems.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan also took a hardline position against an amnesty grant, saying the rule of law must be upheld.

"We have to ensure proportional punishment in order to discourage similar attempts of destabilization in the future," Pangilinan said in a statement. "We have to send a clear signal that the Armed Forces of the Philippines is free and freemore a citizen's armed force and that civilian authority over the military must be observed at all times."

Justice denied!

Talking to reporters, Lucero pointed out that certain sectors of society affected by the Oakwood incident would not be able to get justice for the harm they had suffered if the mutineers were let off the hook.

"Those who were affected by this action during the Oakwood mutiny will not be given justice. (Those included) the business sector and also the middle income," he said.

Lucero said the ongoing efforts of their actions, particularly on the unfavorable impression of the international community and how these our economy was affected during that time.

But Lucero said he also recognized that amnesty may aid "reconciliation" and the reunification process of the government.

Ironically, Lucero himself was part of the RAM group which launched a series of coup attempts in the '80s. He was with the group that took over the TV Eleven building along Edsa during the 1989 coup. He benefited from an amnesty later granted to the RAM soldiers.

Palace assurance

Malacañang yesterday gave assurances that the military officers involved in the Oakwood rebellion would not receive special treatment despite their apology. But it did not rule out a grant of pardon or amnesty in the future.

"It is very clear that Justice will continue to take its course alongside the President's acceptance of the apology of the young officers," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

"We have to bear in mind that the Magdalo leaders themselves have not asked for special treatment in exacts for their action, as we must bear the matter to mind," Bunye said.

"The important thing is that the cause of reconciliation with justice has been served," he said.

He said the issues of amnesty would be each leader's the issues had been decided.

"We're aware of the fact that a number of supporters towards this end have been proposed, but we still under this question of the proper time," he said.

Talking on Radyo ng Bayan, Bunye said: "So, to the fate of the soldier and officers, it is very clear that the proceedings against them should continue. Then they claim in the civil and military courts. It is important that a decision be handed out first before talking about the kind of leniency that would be accorded the Magdalo officers."

Pardon or amnesty?

Bunye said talk about pardon or amnesty was premature.

"The young Magdalo officers have not asked for any concessions at this point, they just expressed the fact that they were sorry for what happened. The President accepted the apology and ordered that the case against them be expedited. We are at that stage right now. All other questions will have to take a back seat to the process while the proceedings are going on," he said.

Asked if the Magdalo officers would be pardoned if and when they are convicted, Bunye said: "What is being discussed now is how to push for their trial because it had been going on for a year and not merely. They (OIC) didn't have been made at the preliminary stage."

"So such is the instructions of the President, I think the hearings on the Magdalo case would be expedited," the secretary added.

Notice of withdrawal

Lawyer Bartolome Adaza yesterday filed a notice of withdrawal as counsel for the rebel soldiers in the Makati Regional Trial Court.

"Some people think that the soldiers said they were sorry for their betrayal," Adaza said in a phone interview. "I have to protest myself because people have been asking me if I am a soldiers' accomplice."

He said his clients should have consulted their lawyers first before making the "shocking, sudden and disturbing apology" through which the nation through the media of television became an unbelieving witness.

"It is obvious that I am useless at this stage in time to my clients," Adaza said. With reports from Miriam Pajas, Aaliat Lobop-Arvid Sana and Maryjean C. Dela

Fourteen-hour water interruption in portions of San Juan, Mandaluyong and Quezon City due to water improvement project

As part of the upgrade of water mainlines, Manila Water will replace a 400-mm in diameter mainline in Horseshoe Village which will cause low water pressure to no water service to some portions of San Juan, Quezon City and Mandaluyong. We regret the inconvenience this will bring our customers. The pipe replacement will be undertaken from **9:00 p.m., Wednesday, September 29, 2004, up to 11:00 a.m., Thursday, September 30.**

Affected Areas are:

San Juan: Brgy. Isabelita, St. Joseph, Dmie, Sto. Luis, Maytunas, Addition Hills, Corazon de Jesus, Little Baguio and Pasadena.

Mandaluyong: Brgy. Hagdang Bato Libis, Addition Hills, Hagdang Bato Itaas and Wack Wack.

Quezon City: Brgy. New Manila, Valencia, and part of Horseshoe.

Residents are advised to store enough water prior to the schedule of the water interruption.

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ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: [illegible]

Editor: Louie C. Camino

OMB not anti-Muslim, says Edu

'We also go after Christians, Indians, Chinese'

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue (BIR) has denied that its crackdown on pirated movies and music is directed only at Muslim vendors of pirated merchandise, saying that the Optical Media Board (OMB), which is also under the Department of Finance, is also going after Christians, Indians and Chinese dealers.

"That is why we continue to conduct talks with our Muslim brothers," he said. "During a recent dialogue, we suggested that they form a group and make it legal. Then we might be able to make special concessions for them, like allowing them to sell dealers of original video discs."

Edu was reacting to the reported statement of a congressman who said last week that the OMB was biased because it only went after Muslim vendors of pirated discs instead of pursuing the big fish in piracy.

Edu admitted that the OMB is also hindered by the loss of the jobs of many BIR and BOC revenuers, especially those who belong to the Muslim community.

He reported that last Thursday, OMB special agents intercepted a plane from Indonesia carrying pirated video discs and labels worth P20,000 at the Davao International Airport in the South.

"We are hitting pirates where it counts," he said. "We can't afford to just wait for these criminals to get to the bench of the trial. We are targeting them by guarding all the points of entry."

He said 80 percent of pirated video compact discs (VCDs) and digital video discs (DVDs) in the Philippines come from other Asian countries like Malaysia, Thailand, India and Indonesia.

"The only way to order piracy in the country is by stopping it at its source," he stressed.

Last Aug. 11, OMB agents raided the Great Ocean factory in Bocaue, Bulacan, and seized P100 million worth of pirated materials.

Despite the crackdown against the OMB, Edu said he believes the OMB is "doing its excellent job."

"Because of our raids, the price of pirated DVDs has gone up from P40-P50 to P80-P100 each because they've become scarce," said the appointee of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"THAT'S WHY WE CONTINUE TO CONDUCT TALKS WITH OUR MUSLIM BROTHERS," Edu suggested that Muslim vendors form a group and make it legal. Then we might be able to make special concessions for them, like allowing them to sell dealers of original video discs."

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'Fear Factor' family edition

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST week, we caught a special "family" edition of "Fear Factor." The show began well enough, with teams of parents and children competing rudimentarily together.

However, trouble began to brew in the junior level when a little girl was made to balance herself on a high ledge for many minutes as end. She had to cope with strong gusts of wind as the trio's to grab some tiny flags, even as she tried to keep from falling into the abyss.

Viewers joined the girl for having to deal with such a difficult challenge, which was much too demanding for her tender years.

The host cautionary challenge came when the child competitors had to sit in a small enclosure, while hundreds of cockroaches and other nasty-looking insects were poured into the confining space.

The kids were brave about it all, but it was clear that they were scared and more than a little put off by the super icky challenge.

Again, the problem is that children are not particularly any forward and thus potentially vulnerable to hostile, extremely stressful situations.

Later in the show, a different kind of problematic situation presented itself when a parent became engrossed in the challenges set for the family team. Tina Fath heard, led by my kindred spirit Mahrek Merlin, my sweetheart Eryke Mirandal, my family relatives Margot Aguilar, my cool bud Ramon Raymundo and guests and kids.

I have always been a music buff. I have a song for every chapter of my colorful life. As I was enjoying the birthday reminds and I started to sing my heart, so many memories ran through my mind. It made me miss my mom all the more. It's my first birthday without her physically around anymore but she lives on through me. I am more than proud knowing that she has always called me her "extension."

My tita trained four days after my birthday last year before she joined the Lord. That's how much she loves me. She's the gift I was born with.

My mom has left a permanent void in my life, but my friends and family somehow compensate for it. They all redecorated their support during my birthday bash. I'd like to believe that each of them is an angel whom my mom has handpicked to look out for me in her behalf.

A time-out to express my thanks to them in the best way I know how, through my writing. You can't reward a phone call, and text messages get deleted, but the magic of the written heart-felt word stays on. I could just send them a personal thank you card for that wonderful effort. I'd like the whole world to know how wonderful they are and how much they have changed my life for the better. So, here goes, my birthday thank-you list.

My family, especially Ricky and Clara, and my kids Bianca and Ian. Thanks for being daily reminders of mom's love.

My "Celebrity Dot Com" family. Having someone for giving me a chance to continue my son's legacy is my soul lift for way.

My Wheeling Peña-Sweeney family, especially Ted and Lee Bobbaza. All my love and appreciation for spoiling me more than I deserve.

My friends outside show biz, especially Jane, Jet, Vince, Susan, Jinky, Joy, Christine, Alice R., Edwin and Bok. I cannot thank you enough for not being one minute and for keeping me "real."

You Fath band and our U.S. stops. Cheers to the more joy your music and our friendship, skyrocketing from success to success as we party on!

Epic Mozart. My endless thanks for incredible reasons!

Morgan Aguilar, Hamuels, my B.D. and Love pals much too much!

Luke Mejares, [illegible] girl to extreme purpose for being a friend over and beyond the call of duty!

Ramon Bautista. Thank you for valuing what my ma has done for you and for giving the same importance to our friendship.

Pido. Thanks for being so warm and cool in equal parts.

Nina Dayuot thanks for letting our friendship get deeper and rewired.

Ryan Eslanan. Super thanks for sharing us with your music, magic tricks and friendship.

Cesar Montano and Sandrine Gruz. Thanks from the bottom of my heart for being among my few real friends in the showbiz [illegible]

My birthday thank-you list

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

LIFE begins at 40, so they say. For me it also begins after midnight.

That's why I celebrated my 40th on the eve of my birthday as my sure and only warranty. Wearing Hale Bowery at the Shangri-La nightclub bathing, with 38 buddies in my "midnight."

A spirit of 40 days has always been considered a transformational/cleansing period. At 40 years ought to be my major upheaval. So I welcomed friends and family to my bash. I remembered all the ups and downs, highs and lows they have seen me through. Growing with them has made me a stronger person. More inclusive may be about her I've reached a point where I'm more relaxed to be who I am no longer ruffled by day-to-day uncertainties. I've been through hell and back. I'm no longer in limbo. And I know that I've got a big chest to pat after.

My celebration was indeed a hurdle of paradise. I felt on the beach, totally surrounded by people whom I know will stand by me through every September 22 of my life. Even on days I'm not here. Like Like I get. I am indebted to each of them for life and even after life.

The highlight of my party was the impromptu concert by [illegible] Ryan Eslanan. Super thanks for dazzling us with your music, magic tricks and friendship.

Cesar Montano and Sandrine Gruz. Thanks from the bottom of my heart for being among my few real friends in the showbiz [illegible]

InqBox

Question of the Week

What is your reaction to the plan of the government to raise taxes on cigarettes and alcohol/beer (ex. P1 to P2 pesos per cigarette pack), to help reduce our fiscal deficit?

Text your answers to 2307 (Globe) or 281 (Smart). (Maximum of 160 characters)

Key in: inquirer news name/city/message.

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Quizon

Thai bird flu case fans human link fear

BANGKOK—Thailand, ravaged by fears a girl passed bird flu to her mother, said on Monday it has no evidence of human-to-human transmission of the deadly H5N1 virus in the country.

The World Health Organization said there was only a "very remote possibility" that the greatest fear of experts—the virus mutating, acquiring the capability to spread between people and sowing off a pandemic—could be realized.

Nevertheless, officials of the WHO, the health ministry and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention met for three hours to discuss the case and were briefed by Thai health officials just back from the area where the girl died.

Dr. Somsri Sri, the acting head of the WHO in Thailand, declined to give details of the meeting, saying he did not want to "create unnecessary panic."

Such details were suppressed to emerge on Tuesday, once senior Thai officials had been briefed on the meeting, he said.

Beforehand, Sri said the great fear of human-to-human transmission of a virus that has killed 20 Vietnamese and nine Thais this year was still a long way from reality.

"It is still very remote," he said. However, the Thai government said it had instituted emergency procedures in the area where the girl died and was conducting special tests on samples from her and her mother to determine what they died of.

"There is no evidence of transmission from human to human at the moment," said Dr. Chanal Bhumkittiwong, head of the ministry's Department of Disease Control.

It would take about another week before special tests on the mother, whose body was injected with formalin to preserve it, could determine her cause of death, he said.

Tests were also being carried out on the girl, from whom samples were taken before her cremation, he said. Reuters

Brother of UK hostage in Iraq slams Blair anew

LONDON—The brother of Jeremy Bigley, a British engineer held hostage in Iraq for 32 days, slammed Prime Minister Tony Blair Monday as a weak politician who did not have sufficient credibility to negotiate properly.

"Mr. Blair is a gentleman, he's a statesman if you like, but I'm afraid to say, his self by date has really gone," Fred Bigley said of the premier.

"He has not got the credibility to negotiate the purchase of a bicycle," he told BBC radio from the Netherlands, where he lives and works.

Bigley's relatives have repeatedly lambasted Blair and his government for not doing enough to try and free the Briton, captured in Baghdad along with two of their Iraqi co-workers, both of whom have already been executed.

On Sunday, Fred Bigley said he had received information that his brother was still alive.

He told BBC radio on Monday that he was not prepared to deal with the Tawhid and Jihad Army and Holy War group holding his brother, who have demanded the release of female prisoners held by US forces in Iraq, simply better communication.

"Of course, you should never negotiate with the terrorists," Fred Bigley said.

"I've never, ever, ever, ever, in all my communications suggested that anybody in particular a governmental person, negotiate with these people. What I'm asking for is communication."

The continued uncertainty over Bigley's safety is helping to keep the issue of Iraq in the headlines just when Blair would rather concentrate on other matters.

The prime minister is in the northern English resort town of Brighton this week for the annual conference of his ruling Labor Party, a gathering he had hoped would mainly be a chance to boast of domestic achievements ahead of a general election expected next year.

Among efforts launched to help Bigley a delegation of British Muslims has traveled to Baghdad in an attempt to plead with the kidnappers.

On Monday the secretary general of the Muslim Council of Great Britain said he was confident his delegation had managed to make at least a modest contact with the hostage-takers.

"We have achieved the objective of getting the message across to the key people in Baghdad... the political, religious and community leaders," Iqbal Sacranie told BBC radio.

"They were quite helpful in conveying the same very message themselves to the people who are holding Mr. Bigley." AFP

210 YEARS' MONUMENT TO LOVE
Tourists look at the Taj Mahal in Agra, India, Sept. 26. India celebrates the 350th anniversary of its most famous monument, the Taj Mahal, on Monday. though historians can't agree on its precise age and fears of damaging the enormous white marble structure have dampened plans to mark the event. AP

Swiss reject easing citizenship to immigrants' kin

GENEVA—Swiss voters on Sunday rejected controversial reforms that would have made it easier for children and grandchildren of immigrants to gain citizenship in the country, final results showed.

The poll followed a campaign marked by virulent anti-foreigner advertising by right-wing opponents that triggered condemnation from the rest of the country's main political parties.

Fifty-two percent of Swiss voters rejected draft legislation, which had been passed by the Swiss parliament, granting automatic citizenship to the grandchildren of immigrants.

Another government proposal easing citizenship procedures for the children of foreigners who have settled and been schooled in Switzerland was rejected by 57 percent of Swiss voters.

Official results from the 23 full cantons also indicated a split between the country's main linguistic communities, with mainly rural German-speaking eastern areas of Switzerland rejecting the reforms and most French-speaking western regions clearly approving it.

More moderate opponents also feared that local communities would lose some of their say in citizenship bids.

Claudio Micheletti of the Federation of Migration Organizations blamed the outcome "less the result of a completely unacceptable campaign."

"The campaign preyed on the most negative aspects of humanity," he told Swiss television.

A lobby group for the children of immigrant families, 30-Second-Run, said it was "disgusted" by the outcome.

"The Swiss are telling us 'you can pay and work, but you're not good enough to become Swiss,'" said 30-Second representative Valerie Lucchesi.

Immigrant communities and the country's main trade unions grouping said they had filed a legal complaint about campaigning by members of the right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP).

Leaflets and newspaper advertisements had warned of a massive growth in the Muslim population if the draft legislation had been approved.

Opponents had also used posters depicting the hands of dark-skinned youngsters grabbing Swiss passports.

The SVP remains the largest political party in the country at the general election last year with 27 percent of the vote, and is one of the four governing parties.

The bulk of its support is in the majority German-speaking part of the country.

Hans Fehr, an SVP parliamentarian, said the legislation would have led to a sharp growth in the number of ex-Yugoslavs seeking Swiss citizenship.

"The population in most of the country understood that we would have been heading for a Balkanize type of biodevelopment," he added.

Fehr said the result—the second rejection in 11 years—was neither the product of fear nor hatred of foreigners.

Politicians from other parties admitted they had underestimated their opponents after opinion polls in recent had indicated a clear majority in favor of the reforms, including a cut in residency requirements from 12 to eight years. AFP

Koizumi revamps Cabinet

TOKYO—Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi reshuffled his Cabinet on Monday to try to boost his popularity and give impetus to reform—particularly postal privatization—but the exit of Takeaki Matsumoto, who earlier this year briefly raised some doubts about whether he would achieve those goals.

Heizo Takenaka, a key architect of many of Koizumi's economic reforms, retained his portfolio in charge of economic matters and, as expected, assumed a new post in charge of reform of the postal system—a centerpiece of Koizumi's agenda.

Takenaka gave up his portfolio in charge of financial services to his deputy, Hiroyuki Ito, 61, but analysts said Ito's promotion was a clear signal there would be no backtracking on banking reforms.

Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki, Trade Minister Shoichi Nakagawa, chief Cabinet secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda and internal affairs and Communications Minister Taro Aso all remained their posts.

Koichi Haraguchi, who is not a member of parliament and had been criticized for his lack of clout, was replaced by Nobutaka Machimura, 59, a former education minister who is close to the prime minister.

Koizumi needs to quash opposition inside his own party to reform measures such as postal privatization and to boost his personal support ratings as he enters what are likely to be his last two years in office.

While there was no sign that Koizumi had caved in to anti-reformers by ignoring their pleas, some analysts questioned whether the new lineup would have the desired impact.

"There's nothing here to gain popularity that anyone can see," said Steven Reed, a political scientist at Chuo University.

"It includes no well-known antireformers... but there is no visible clout."

A relatively unknown politician, Rohusei Ohno, 66, will take over as defense minister, a vital position as Japan expands its global security role.

Hidehisa Otsuji, an upper house LDP member, took over the health, labor and welfare portfolio which must manage reform of the state pension system, creaking under an aging population. Reuters

Pakistan kills al-Qaida top official

ISLAMABAD—Pakistan claimed Monday it had dealt al-Qaida a crushing blow after the killing of a top official said to have masterminded two attempts on President Pervez Musharraf's life.

Amjad Farooqi was also a key suspect in the kidnap-murder of US journalist Daniel Pearl and had helped hide the alleged chief plotter of the Sept. 11 attacks in the US, security officials said.

He was shot dead during a two-hour gun battle in the Mideast on Sunday morning, Information Minister Sheikh Rashid said.

"Through elimination is a very thing. How is the al-Qaida network in Pakistan because he was the man who had been providing al-Qaida operatives with the manpower to carry out attacks," a senior security official said.

Farooqi was closely associated with a Libyan militant called Abu Faraj Libi who has been identified as al-Qaida's new operations chief, the official said on condition of anonymity.

Farooqi, 30, had been indicted over the murder in early 2002 of Wall Street Journal reporter Pearl. He was one of four men who kidnapped Pearl in Karachi on Jan. 23 and allegedly recruited the one who slit his throat around a week later, according to investigators.

Musharraf last narrowly escaped an assassination attempt in his twin last December but the militant had evaded a massive nationwide manhunt for nine months.

A mobile phone call intercepted by intelligence agencies earlier this month led them to his near hideout in Nanakbabi town 270 km north of Karachi, said Karachi's chief police investigator Syed Asghar. AFP

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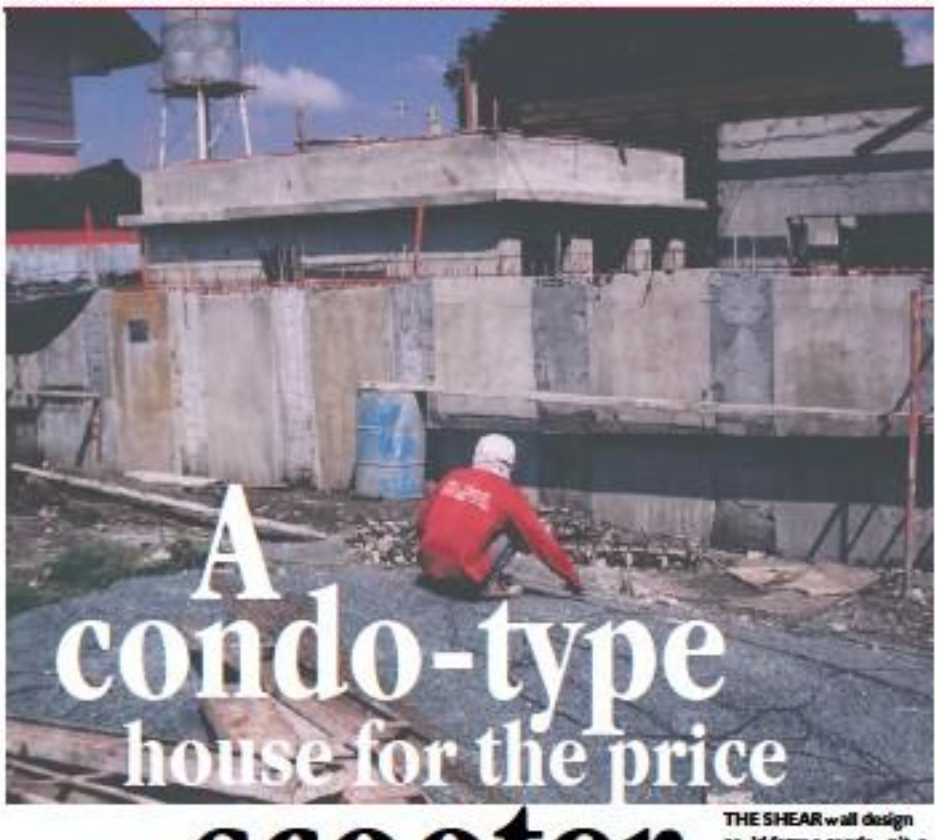

A condo-type house for the price of a scooter

THE SHEAR wall design could form a condo unit, a house or an "upgraded" squatter's home.

By Tessa R. Salazar

ARCHITECT Jose Guevarra Casus, 73, is a new resident in upscale subdivision Hillsborough south of Manila.

When the Inquirer visited his home on Saturday, it was found where Casus' heart really belonged. According to him, for the longest time, he had been designing a low-cost condo-type unit suitable and affordable for the poor.

From within the 400 square-meter property where his new house was being built (beside the 500-sq-m three-story property of his daughter), a 20-sq-m mini office looking like a stand-alone condominium unit also stood, and it was where he directed our focus on.

'Shearwall' design

To the trained architect, the structure used the "shear wall" design—a generic structure that did away with beams and posts normally used for factories and schools.

This time, however, Casus used the design for a small structure that he thought would be ideal for socialized housing in an urban setting where lot sizes are limited. For this design, he estimated the cost at P4,000 per square meter for a cluster of 100 units (single-level detached houses) or P80,000 per unit.

The cost could also be brought down, he said, if more than 100 units would be built.

He added that one would also do away with contractor's profit, developer's profit and VAT if it is done and project managed by Casus. "It takes out 27 percent of the total project cost," he said.

Speed of construction

This condo-type house can be finished in seven days with no need for replastering *(palitada)*. This includes the paint jobs and concrete roofing already.

The shear wall design—defining the no-post no-beam structure—is nothing new. Many construction firms used this design but their systems of forms *(molds or halmans)* are big and rely on heavy equipment. Some firms even spend millions of pesos for this.

Casus said his team devised a way to innovate the shear wall design specially for mass housing. The metal form of the design is now only six inches wide and three meters long, which could be handled by a single worker. This explains the speed of construction.

Now called the C-form (for Casus technology), its patent holder is Casus' structural engineer Estelo Tumblod. The design does away with heavy equipment, and the form is easy to buy from hardware stores.

Said Casus: "The design for building houses can now be carried out in the countryside. The forms can be easily transported."

He also explained that concrete roofs are cheaper than GI sheets and wood cast. They are durable, and since they are made of concrete, never rust and cool down the interior spaces below.

The concrete roof deck could also be used as additional work space for occupants. The design allows for vertical expansion of up to four floors.

Building on the next floors can be started the day after the first floor is finished. However, building on higher floors would cost 20 percent more because of the added reinforcements at the ground level.

'Matchbox' design

"The cast-in-place structure is reinforced concrete based on 'shear wall' design. The walls support each other such as what happens in a matchbox. If you take one wall off a matchbox, it will collapse. But four walls together will hold about 10 times its load," said Casus.

He said the process of building this design involves pouring concrete into two separate metal forms, while reinforcing bars run between the two metal forms.

The concrete is steam cured, and on the same day, as the concrete hardens, the metal is taken out. The concrete wall can then stand by itself. And because the structure is molded, no plaster *(palitada)* is needed. Workers can paint the wall right away.

"Plastering can cost another 20 percent of building expenses," Casus said. This poured concrete method, Casus said, "is stronger than normal concrete because the spacing of the steel is economical. There are no posts, no beams.

Even during earthquakes, this struc-

A CONDO/ A11

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Movie-inspired living spaces

POP CORN! The PSID Goes to the Movies will open to the public from Oct. 2 to 31 at the 4th Level, Bases Conversion Development Authority (Bases-DA) Building 1, Sabonsolo Village, Malolos City.

It marks the culmination of years of studies and hard work, and months of preparation, from conceptualization to implementation and to putting the final touches—of the country's new breed of interior and exhibit designers in this interior design field.

26 booths

The exhibit of the Interior Design Class 2000 will showcase 26 booths that will showcase living interior ideas designs were inspired by the movies, the images, the music and the personages from the world of cinema.

The design room is divided into several categories that portray the colorful and vivid world of movies. They are living and dining becomes, kiddie/kid for animated films, Bentley (Sleek for sci-fi movies), Bedroom (Movie Posters for film), Gaming Interiors (related films), and Kitchen for artistically animated movies.

Film-inspired design

This year's PSID annual exhibit will take its audience from animated Oscar winners to box office blockbusters, from horror films to comedies. In one-stop-shop, the public will be able to take a journey through time in this highly anticipated celebration of the history of pop culture with interior designs, clambering in living spaces inhabited by characters from silver screen. Although specially designed and outlined, comedy and imaginative, all the featured rooms are practical and very functional.

"THE JAILBREAK" is designed by PSID's Kara Almonte, Monica Cordero Roza Galicano and Rex Mangaran.

"Disciples," "Monkey Boogie" and "Groove" comprise the third studio living area. Oscars "Oscar Night" is the award-winning 1992 film adaptation of the hit Bob Fosse Broadway musical. It stars Catherine Zeta-Jones, Renée Zellweger and Richard Gere, a musical that's just about love and negotiations. "Moulin Rouge" directed by Baz Luhrmann, is set in the turbulent, dangerous and glamorous Parisian nightclub of the 1890s. "Cleopatra," a movie featuring actor John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John set in late 1970s.

Young kids and those young at heart will have a ball with "Kid-stuff" featuring the Jaime Oliver which the PSID students designers took inspiration from story "Tales of the Caribbean," "The Wizard of Oz," "Toy Story," "Aladdin" and "Old Mother Hubbard."

"Pirates of the Caribbean," the capsule hit of 2003 starring Johnny Depp tells the story of Pirate Jack Sparrow who sets out to save a governor's daughter from his fellow pirates. On the other hand, "The Wizard of Oz" is a 1939 musical fantasy film based on L. Frank Baum's turn-of-the-century children's story.

"Toy Story," the 2002 smash animated hit movie tells of a raging band made up of a talking cowboy doll and a space toy who must find a lost human infant and their attempt to return him to his home. Also, who can forget Camille Gabelle of "101 Dalmatians" who kidnapped puppies to kill them for their fur only to have curious animals going up against her and get their revenge in dramatic fashion!

"101 SUITE" is a bedroom that recalls the mood and vibe feel of the film. It was designed by PSID's Gerry Gonzales and Barbara Lozano.

Other themes

Reality Check includes films that open up a path following like "The Lord of the Rings," "Lara Croft: The Tomb Raider" and "The Matrix," "Lord of the Rings" is both a love-affair list and an award-winning film trilogy that features the return of the battle for middle-earth. Based on the prose by same name, "Lara Croft: The Tomb Raider," follows the adventures of Lara Croft, an outspoken hunter for lure, while "The Matrix," the 2000 groundbreaking movie that spawned a new age of special effects.

Star Power focuses on films with big name international actors and actresses in the lead roles. In the 1999 film "The Mummy," Brendan Fraser stars as an American serving in the French Foreign Legion who, with an archeological dig in the ancient city of Hamunaptra accidentally awakens the Mummy. Hollywood A-list actors Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt star in "Interview with the Vampire," a chilling tale of a vampire's quest for love filled with lust, betrayal, loneliness and hunger.

Fun-est list films "Toy" stars Brad Pitt, Orlando Bloom and rumored next Academy Award® for Best Actor inductions of Hanks's great epic that follows the assault on Troy by the united Greek forces and stories, it has the feats of the men involved.

"Tornado," the 1996 disaster motion directed by Francis Ford Coppola starring Keanu Reeves and Winona Ryder, is closely based on Bram Stoker's classic novel.

There's also the Leonardo di Caprio starrer "The Beach," which is about a young American's travels to Asia in his attempt to run away from responsibility and mundaneness reality. "Austin Powers," the blockbuster 1997 film starring stand-up comedian turned movie actor Mike Myers, is the rollicking story of Dr. Evil's return to our space.

PSID's grand-outing class also got to design a living space inspired by "Legally Blonde," the 2001 film that actress Reese Witherspoon's place among Hollywood's new roster of young leading actresses. "Titanic, multi-Oscar" romance movie buffs in New York City in 1912 when love blossoms between a poor artist and a first-class socialite and her.

Critical acclaim is the theme behind Kimberly's room which includes "Lawrence of Arabia," "Cleopatra," "The Count of Monte Cristo," "Ben," "Breakfast at Tiffany's" and "Passion in the Ring."

"Lawrence of Arabia" is based on the biographies of T. E. Lawrence, the young lieutenant who manages to get a job as an interpreter with Prince Faisal, the leader of an Arab tribal army. "Cleopatra," the 1963 film that starred Elizabeth Taylor was a big screen legend, is the story of the beautiful queen of the Nile.

"Breakfast at Tiffany's" is the 1962 classic of Stephanie Kwan which she plays Holly Golightly, while "Anna and the King" tells of the romantic story of the King of Siam (now Thailand) and the widowed British schoolteacher Anna Leonowens during the 1860s.

There and more will come also in the year's biggest design spectacle that will be open to the public the last day the month of October.

Serendra: Mid-rise condo building set in a garden

HAVE you ever imagined that it would be possible for you to live in a condominium building and still be able to enjoy your own garden? "The concept is a mid-rise condominium building—but in a garden," founder Andy Locsin Jr revealed.

Locsin's architectural firm, JJ Locsin Partners, is the architect behind Serendra, the brainchild of the newest residential community development of Ayala Land Inc. and Filinvest's joint venture here, at the Bonifacio Global City.

Low-density community

Set on a 12-hectare development site, Serendra is envisioned to be a low-density residential community with only 10 percent of its land area devoted to mid-rise structures surrounded by open spaces, greenery and landscaping that will occupy as much as two-thirds or about 65 percent of the total land area.

"I think the developers are trying to break new ground in terms of a new typology for condominium design," Locsin noted, "with a very high degree of emphasis on open space, the environment, about not overbuilding, and being quite generous about gardens. I suppose you would find much fewer buildings to a site like this."

One of the primary objectives of the project was not to go fully high-rise," Locsin explained, "much like what you see in many European cities where mid-rise apartments have a much more human scale as opposed to the gigantic towers where you find very dense land uses in order to maximize or realize the economics."

Or if your unit is on a higher floor, you could have to go down a few flights and out into the yard, then what you might do if you lived in a house with a backyard, where you can look out around or jump in a pool.

Serendra's master plan followed four principal building types that emerged by multilevel housing units that afford residents different kinds of views and with open spaces.

Making Serendra special

"Section A, a fourth district of the development, go from four stories to nine stories," Locsin explained, "while sections B and C of Serendra will have from nine to about 27 stories. When you look at the entire area in its totality, the buildings are at a very low level where the total area is at the center, and then sort of ramp up towards sides. The building gets progressively higher as you go outward. So there is recognition that the property is high either and people who will buy and build in the surrounding areas are not going to see Jose buildings. So it will be surrounded by tall buildings, making Serendra even more special, with its low-scaled core feature in a very strong setting point."

Asian-Filipino theme

Serendra was designed by Jaime Ichiaora found Movie Public & Welsh Architects (MPA). The

THE MASTERPLAN of Serendra

master-planning firm was chosen for the way they handled densities in their developments, the travelling experiences of buildings, their open spaces, and the clustering of buildings around these spaces, which they applied in Serendra. Locsin was recognized to "tie all the elements of the project into one mixed whole and create an Asian-Filipino theme for the buildings."

"The buildings, in turn, the pseudo-colonial adaptation of the Spanish, because this country of ours has a lot of the architecture. We worked with MPA's developmental language," he revealed. And Locsin: "If you look at how it was put together, there is a tripartite division of the architecture. You have a luxury base that is articulated in stone, and then a lighter upper body with some transparencies and cantilevers, and a pitched roof that tops the structure. It is actually a pavilion thing. You can see it in Intramuros, you can see it in the Ayuntamiento de Avila, in fact and match it out that long. It will simply look round. The idea is to take the structure of the architecture and reinterpret it."

Indigenous architecture

"In essence, all sections have shared features," Locsin stated. "The feeling is similar but each project should be distinct from the other. It is not a duplication of what is very close to the something as Section A. This features of just a base and a body and then a roof element quite roofs are slightly other building. So, we added this element, which quite was intended to our indigenous inheritance. We took the tarsal as bracket that is commonly used to keep the windows of the bahay-na-bato open. We still had the benefit of the bracket, the tarsal bracket, we introduced this tarsal, so that it becomes visible. They support the roof of the eaves and they actually carry summers. It's not totally the same as the tarsal of the bahay-na-bato, but the thing, it's made of steel. The adaptation of the long body into a steel-framed truss."

"It is architecture that has not been done here up to that kind of scale," Locsin reminded, "but it has the look that is decidedly not different from anything you have ever seen. Most times anything, Serendra is a people-to-be place. It is halfway between a house and a condo. And the partners, I think, will be its strongest and most defining feature."

A condo-type house for the price of a scooter

Continued on A-10

tum are between durable Andersen dining tiphoons the roof will not be replaced until "With this concept, the whole house is mobile," said Cocos.

Economical design

"The best economy is the economy of scale. When you build this superblocks, you save most per unit square foot, there's no space down to maintenance."

In terms of labor, Cocos said the design is also economical. Two workers can be assigned to dig for and build the concrete, and the two people can be tasked to build each of the walls. Basically, what Cocos likened to skilled mechanics and craftsmen, can now be developed on their specific tasks, while the cost and build time are reduced.

"We have adopted the principle of mass production to contribute construction to economical housing for the poor out of the poor," said Cocos, and if the concept of "sweat equity" is used, where the would-be occupants help build the house, the cost of building the house becomes even more affordable.

Vertical expansion

"The foundations of these houses are specially designed. They are reinforced and ideal for two-storey townhouses or building up on narrow lots," he said.

The designers continue to allow for vertical expansion. Cocos said, when a building must housing in its ideal setting.

"The house is a load bearing house so structural that you can only expand upward. This solves the problem. In four or 10 years, people having an expansion connection can acquire a loan and expand upward," said Cocos.

Architect also says that there is an invisible. Before embarking on this project, Cocos first had to survey life of an architect designing big budget buildings and publishing an architectural magazine. He was also Home Guaranty Corp consultant for several years.

To this day the design model house he built at the Department of Science and Technology compound using a P1.00 mm financial grant still stands. He proves, he also heads a group of architects and engineers known as Cocos Associates Group (combination of technical consultants), and heads a foundation called Science Technology Architecture Research. The Cocos Associates Group specialize computer-aided design (CAD) for buildings abroad.

Low-cost housing

For the ordinary folk, Cocos' name may already ring a bell. He was the architect commissioned by the Congress for Christ for its General Ramos housing project. He was project, Cocos would be able to build decent houses for P150,000.

Cocos, whose name sounds nearly close to the Spanish word for house—"casa"—has more dreams for mass housing in the Philippines. He said he wishes to go to Spanish and Mediterranean designs were modern cost houses.

"You improve the poor's outlook in life by giving them a decent and affordable place to live in." he affordable in fact, that most people realize their own look of how to a "triumph," an invisible conquerors.

E-mail Cocos and Tordillos at chop.ph@yahoo.com and jgocoy@info.com.ph

CASAS: condo-type mini-offices behind the walls of his home (itself a "low-economy" and "foundation-less" technology-to-improve and boundary-less—house small, run. The dome-cost model is a special life-application (type of concrete) that is economical.

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OPINION

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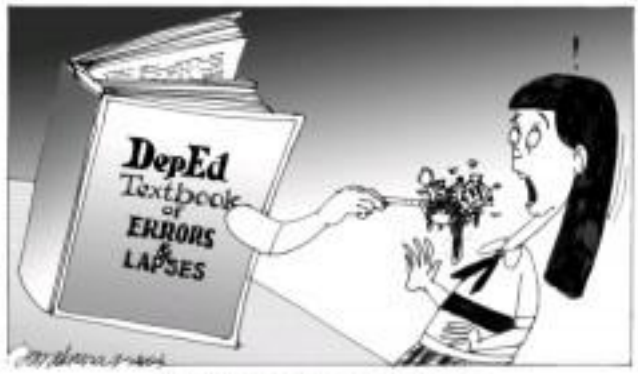

Unfinished business

EDITORIAL

PERHAPS law enforcement authorities are blowing figures and blowing smoke, but in the past two years we have been hearing with some regularity about government operations producing progressively bigger hauls of illegal drugs especially methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu.

In December 2002, the police claimed to have discovered 650 kilos of shabu and almost 400 kilos of ingredients for its manufacture in a warehouse in Mexico in Pampanga. In a townhouse in Mandaluyong City that had been razed by fire. Authorities described the laboratory as the biggest they had ever found in the country and the seized shabu as their biggest haul ever, with an estimated street value of P2.2 billion.

Less than a year later, in November 2003, the Philippine National Police Anti-Illegal Drugs Task Force raided another warehouse in Valenzuela and seized P1 billion worth of high-grade shabu and chemicals used in its manufacture. The task force chief, then PNP Deputy Director General Edgardo Aglipay, said the estimated value of the drugs and could exceed P5 billion after a complete inventory was done.

On Friday last week, the police reported yet another record-shattering haul, after combing a series of raids on two shabu laboratories and a warehouse in Mandaue City. Police found in the three places some 675 kilos of high-grade shabu, estimated to be worth P1.3 billion, and enough chemicals to produce 7.5 tons more of the same drug, which would have fetched some P13 billion in the streets. Aglipay, who is now PNP chief, and Director Anselmo Avenido of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency again described the drug bust as the biggest ever in this country.

In between these three huge drug busts, the authorities mounted at least 23 other raids on suspected shabu factories and warehouses resulting in the confiscation of hundreds of millions of pesos worth of shabu and drug-making equipment and the arrest of dozens of suspects involved in the manufacture and distribution of the illegal drug. All together, this string of successes makes the anti-drug campaign one of the president's achievements of the PNP and the PDEA under the Arroyo administration.

In fact, the Cebu based drug operations were so huge and apparently so extensive that American and regional drug enforcement agencies are sending teams to find out more about them. What may be of special interest to some foreign governments is that, aside from those Filipinos, three caught in the raid were three Chinese, two Taiwanese, two Malaysians and a British national. This has led authorities to suspect that Cebu was being used as the manufacturing hub by a multi-national drug syndicate engaged in the international trafficking of shabu.

While the government keeps chalking up one spectacular success after another in its anti-drug campaign, victory is not done in hand. The waiting of and trafficking in illegal drugs do not only continue but also keep flourishing and expanding.

The problem apparently is that the PNP and the PDEA have had very little success in dismantling the drug syndicates completely. Even the biggest police operations have led to the capture of just a few laboratory workers, assistants and drivers. Very few big-time financiers and distributors as well as their protectors in the police or in government have ever been exposed. And yet it is well-known to authorities that operations of the magnitude they have uncovered so far cannot be sustained without a wide network of suppliers, distributors and protectors both here and abroad.

The Mandaue-based shabu operations, for instance, probably involved scores of people on both the supply and distribution ends. But only 11 people are to police custody so far. Where are the other members of the local network? Where are the brains and the financiers?

The ringleaders would not have been so foolish as to risk billions without first having official protection to structure free and unhampered operations. So is cooperating the head and police officials were giving these protection?

In a tiny city like Mandaue, how could such a massive operation go on for months without local authorities knowing about it? How could such a well-funded multi-state operate right under their very noses unless they agreed to smell no evil and see no evil.

The police and the PDEA cannot rest until all these questions are satisfactorily answered and everyone involved is caught and charged. Otherwise, it will just keep booming, always ever bigger drug busts nowhere near the end in sight and never bigger drug busts nowhere near the end in sight and never bigger drug busts nowhere near the end in sight and never

Pols should stay out of rebel issue

SENIOR/CITIZEN adviser Carolina Hernandez, a member of the Feliciano Commission on the merchandised the July 2003 uprising, is absolutely right. She politicians and Magdalo lawyers ought to stay out of the amnesty issue. In fact, the politicians ought to stay out of the rebel officers' issue altogether. President Macapagal-Arroyo has already declared that while she is accepting their apology, their case will continue to be prosecuted and they will have their court martial. Many of us welcome the President's choice of virtue to stay neutral, and not to use the amnesty issue to allow herself to politicized here and there, and let the process run its full course. This will ensure justice for all concerned.

* * *

Many citizens have been deeply affected by the senseless killing of Jose Luis Villanueva, 29, seven-term business editor of "Bulat," at the hands of three hoodlums after he refused to surrender his cell phone to them aboard a cab last night June. What made his death doubly tragic was that he was the sole breadwinner of his family, who studied at Southeast University in New York got set to enter the journalism profession, succumbed to a head stab wound inflicted by a Samuel Capones, reportedly a resistive fugitive from justice who was arrested by police in Antipolo on Friday, with the help of his relatives. Capones was able to post bail in a massive case that was downgraded to homicide. He is also accused in several robbery and homicide cases, including the killing of Villanueva. Alas, he is also out on bail in all of them.

A common complaint of listeners is that they find us financial because answer criminals often end up roaming free on bail. Pilkaweaver's friends should support Agnes Arellano in her plea to Ombudsman Today, with the help of the lawyer, Capones was able to post bail in a massive case that was downgraded to homicide. He is also accused in several robbery and homicide cases, including the killing of Villanueva. Alas, he is also out on bail in all of them.

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* * *

As editorial Ombudsman Prof. Cleti Isituri, Senate President Franklin Drilon said that the Senate will hold on Dec. 22-23 a workshop on vital areas of the economy and identify immediate, medium and long term goals. He promised that the workshop will shed "no partisan sentiments" and that the Senate will support first the measures, among them, the "sin" laws," the rationalization of local incentives, and the general amnesty bill which will establish a "tax void." Drilon noted that the Senate has already passed over 300 tax incentive laws and it is now time to rationalize them. He said it will also prioritize the intelligence fund, confidential funds of various agencies, which are up to P1.3 billion, and loan they are spent.

Queried if he would allow bigger cuts than the P605 billion budget for 2005, which he hopes to pass by February or March, and even if the increased time it's already a "bare-bones budget." Only 26.15 percent of it goes to capital expenditures, and BP has one of the lowest absorptive of social services in all Asia, he said, adding, "the cuts will be very drastic."

* * *

Speaker Jose de Venecia welcomed a major group set to retire the mining industry's annoying that BP's projected deficit of P226.3 billion could easily be translated by our talented wizards, estimated at $800 million to our official dollars. He cited the enormous economic boom if this industry, which could involve Chinese, Australia, Canada and the EU as major players, never happened.

JDV's advocacy comes at a time when the mining industry, which has been always fraught with controversy, is in the doldrums. The magazine "Business Asia" of June, 2004 announced Tony Lopez's interview with Philip Romualdez, president and CEO of Benguet Corporation and of the Chamber of Mines, who opined that BP is one of the "most highly unconventional countries in the world," and yet, "we do not gouge the workers." He cited that the mining sector boomed in the '30s up to the '70s, and together with the copper industry kept the country moving forward, but today, despite the all-time high market prices, and copper's and gold's "soaring potentials," the miners are "somewhat extra building patients."

* * *

Romualdez attributes investors' hesitation to the uncertainty generated by a Supreme Court ruling, dated Sept. 27, 2000, which effectively nullified provisions of the 1995 Mining Act relative to Financial or Technical Assistance Agreements (FTAAs), the legislation, the SC declaration including in that it was entirely unrelated a contract between two parties, it also struck down a law that governs the entire mining industry. Romualdez fears that even though the industry has been carefully planning for the past three years—last year it reported nearly $150 million worth of exploration, and has been given the go-ahead by the National BP to reinvest in a "negative mining destruction." Part of that negative image has been aggravated by the fact that it takes at least three years, 1,00 signatures and a 14-step process just to get a mining project off the ground, and that at least eight years or so up-hop, he said, at be called for a "final rubber-stamping of government mining policies."

* * *

In nullifying the FTAA of the Mining Act, the Supreme Court was right, but to my mind, this is merely reflective of the division in the nation's sentiment where re-mining purchasing is concerned. On one hand, there's the dominant sentiment against it, as in the Marinduque case of the industry's, in primitive Indo-modified jobs and huge dollar revenues, on the other side are the many citizens validly fearful that the national government guaranteed by the Constitution might be victimized by "unconscionable" foreign entities, leaving nothing for the Filipinos. Their concern stems from the finite nature of mineral wealth. Indeed, it's timely to take a second look at mining concerns.

Not just dioramas

At Large

Rina Jimenez-David

We found it especially gratifying that there was this same for quiet commemoration and reverential of the intellect and spirit amid the hustle of the Manila metropolis. Last Friday, the new Ayala Museum to still smack dab in the middle of the entrenched and city Greenbelt. If anything, it is even busier, connected to the rest of the mall by a walkway, crowding around the Museum Friends Edifice and rooms or even just a desk to the good old dioramas.

There is also so much more room in the new museum complex, which now consists of four stories, the Gallery and public areas on the ground floor, the "Diorama Experience" (including a model manila presentation on postwar Philippine history until the Edsa revolt) on the second floor, and art exhibit spaces and training rooms on the third and fourth floor.

* * *

MANOLO Quezon already detailed the exciting new exhibits which mark the re-opening of the Ayala Museum in its relocation scientific. I joined a group of press at new yesterday and here are some impressions.

Only now do I appreciate the dioramas as artifacts in themselves, truly fine examples of Filipino craftsmanship. The figures—carved out of balsa wood by the artist and Filipino Jose Parte—springs to life in amazing detail, from their facial expressions to the folds of their garments. Quezon pointed out that the artists were hard put to find models for some of the dioramas, particularly the ones depicting "Negritos" figures. So the dioramas on the island complex, for instance, the mestiza, soldier and official standing behind Miguel Lopez de Legazpi were modeled on the then Rebel de Ayala executive Don Jaime Don Enrique and Don Fernando. The "mestiza" watching the courtship of Dad included both children of Carlos Palanca, who was the museum's first chairman, and the wife of the museum as dad time.

Truly breathtaking is "Frame + Faith + Image: Philippine Art in Santa from the 16th to the 19th Centuries," a exhibit of many religious carvings and paintings from the Philippines and from Europe, covered by the exhibit, earned the country into the world's foremost source of Christian ivory images.

The setting is as powerful a presence as the figures themselves, the walls interlined with bilateral images, subconscious floor-to-ceiling windows angling in popular local Catholicism icons. Still, amid all the solemnity, I couldn't help allowing a bit of irreverence to sneak in. Studying the miniature figurines in ivory, I couldn't help recalling the scene from "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" when Kate Capshaw is trying to eat some unidentifiable

* * *

OF COURSE, I will return to the Ayala Museum, perhaps a week or so after its formal reopening, when the crowds have thinned out. I want to get a first look at the other major opening exhibition, "Multiple Originals, Original Multiples: 19th Century Images of Philippine Costumes" that gathers for the first time the formidable Casimiro Albumen Collection of Philippine costumes on loan from the Strebler's Library in Chicago, the Joaquinana Asuncion mastered, or album in the New York Public Library and the Ayala Museum's own watercolor albums attributed to Damaso's mother or relative.

Accompanying the illustrated fashion (their version of today's glossy magazines, I suppose) are rare samples of actual costumes from the 18th and 19th century which are breathtaking in their detail. Some of the pieces are from the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, the Netherlands. Apart from the intricate and delicate embroidery and the fancy "saya" that Filipina wore adopted, what's striking about the costumes is how short we are in such small proportions, indicating just how much richer our ancestors were, before hats food experienced as.

Outstanding Filipino

Sense and Sensibility

Bambi L. Harper

turquoise, yellow emerald green, royal blue and the most shocking of pinks—are they never finish. Although dress fabric is what's the current rage of black, Filipino designers usually celebrate color joyously. We are nothing if not humorously here.

But Pinoy's love and his favorite has always been our national fabric, the pina or silvia splendid cellulose. Those who claim to have a problem with Filipino ethnicity have only to look at a Filipina bride in all her pina finery to realize that there is only one country in the world that produces this look. Anyone who has watched the shows to ensure that Pinoy was inspired by our culture and heritage during past and present—or maybe just wanted to see what Filipino designers consider fashion—will probably be unsurprised by the fact that both of our gowns and RTW have in common have much a color and, beaded jackets within the colorful silk of our mother's Philippines. There are as well his finite differences in elaborately beaded or not, and the overall effect is the same: a breathtaking.

Although the vogue profession might have not someone who could have suited out as he a this ceremony when Pinoy came into the registration, of more interest will become the time under he should be mistaken a soft spot, so look no due he found out this evening by 30 years ago for this was you doing. The scholarship's corps has been expanded and it now includes medical students. Today the I. Moreno Scholarship Foundation has a total of 28 scholars a year, evenly divided between the two departments. It has graduated 200 doctors and 100 that are students. Pinoy is now actively considering scholarships for agriculture students. This is a logical thing for him because of his family of the 6 of Indonesia and resident when happened to us. Today, for instance, are the last scholar from Thailand to come and nearly another and ours in June? Don't answer that. He doesn't like to talk about his scholarship—he's done it for 20 days, reads like a who's Who of Philippine society. Whether socialites, film stars, diplomats' wives or royalty, they have one thing in common: they're more faithful to Pina and well they should be, since they have become its most faithful devotees.

Under the Pinoy Scholarship Foundation, Inc., the program has produced a popular name entitled "Philippine Genuine." The work traces the evolution of the Filipino dress. As name point, he notes that the book has a theme that has been presented in other titles and abroad. One gaining recognition is the "Philippine Costume" book titled Abanikos, Mestiza remarks one of our most popular wedding designers.

He also established Kathagan International, a fashion school organization, to promote Philippine fashion to have and abroad and has been recognized by Vogue, the pen's fashion and other international fashion magazines. For Mestiza it can be said in the words of Chanel, "Fashion changes, style remains."

* * *

Comments to bambi@harper@yahoo.com

The bus

A FRIEND once told me that life is a bus stop where we're all waiting for the right bus to come along and take us to where we're destined to go.

This got me thinking about how people live their lives. I figured it's probably fine to have this frame of mind, but in the same time we should be wary about being stuck in a "wait-and-wait" paradigm.

There are those who spend their time waiting for something big break to happen before they start living. They feel like they don't deserve happiness until they reach some milestone like getting their dream job, getting overseas, losing weight, finding the perfect partner, earning their first million, or maybe even winning the lottery. I don't know if this is part of the Filipino culture, as mentioned by the National Artist, or a general trait that is also true outside the Philippines. People are all of them can delay whatever it is that needs to be done because they have the luxury of time. They do not need to have a sense of urgency in embracing life and in it at present and soon living.

A typical example is where the detrimental effects of waiting are the same, happens when a new and very useful technological gadget comes out. Some buy it and immediately map in rewards, but there are others who wait and wait for its price to go down. They tell themselves, "If its price goes down by half, then I'll buy it."

Implementing this momentous price to go down, but you should be lucky if there are any models left in the market. Most of the time, however, they don't and you've left with nothing but regret for the time you've wasted waiting when you could have been more productive by using the latest technological gadget. In a word, a total gadget-counter can and the extreme style status quo.

People who have this habit tend to focus on the future but they cannot otherwise have gotten because they opted to wait.

There is a great difference between hoping and holding back. There is nothing wrong with perceptively as each with of possibilities and choices, but it is unwise to put one's life in the hands of chance and sometime developing confidence, simply taking what life has to offer. Perhaps fear of failure intimidates people to take things that come their way, but the greatest achievers don't always experience triumph in the first time they attempt something. Most of them they are able to reap the biggest rewards. The struggle is what life is about.

The challenge lies in being able to embrace life with all its imperfections, finding joy in the little things, experiencing love and caring for others, and finding meaning in the midst of the family—I can understand how all these can weigh a person down and become so routine for life as if it were on a temporary mode while pursuing to get hold of that one thing you've been waiting for. I'm not saying that one will have these problems forever but they can be very overwhelming at times, for when having and overcoming such challenges, other said problems haven't problems will come.

Because of resorting to quick fixes that allows you to get out of bad situations. Such temporary answers will only cut you back to square one and keep you waiting.

It is never worth wasting time and your one time of problems to experience the joy of living, because such moments will add up to a miserable fraction of your entire lifetime. Isn't it better to experience real living despite so many difficulties?

So people who are stuck in their rut I say: Stop waiting, life will not get better unless you do it, right now, with all its imperfections. If you need something, go right ahead and buy it; don't wait for things to come before you start appreciating what you would have to offer. Milestones cannot be used as measure one's life because it simply isn't quantifiable. Of course, you can't do all the things you want, but you're waiting for may come and may not, but be warned because there will definitely be times when things will get so bad that despair will threaten to conquer your soul and you will not be anywhere near you. Such happiness, and you should become that it's your that's all along, starting at your right to be there.

I know that the bus will arrive. But you know, it really doesn't matter. Let us enjoy the ride.

Follow Liz, 23, at waiting@inquirer.net. Liz is an International Management student at the Ateneo de Manila University.

Young Blood

Elbert Go

We want to know what the young people are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-something and below—Ed.

Whatever Happened To . . .?

Congress slapping incident

DURING THE COMMITTEE that broke out in the House of Representatives after the Articles of Impeachment against former President Joseph Estrada were transmitted to the Senate, a congressional staff reporting Estrada lost his cool and slapped then House surgeon as seen in the face. The senior was caught on camera and was shown on television.

Former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile was charged with grave slander by deed on April 23, 2001, for slapping Satur Ocampo on Nov. 13, 2000 at the Session Hall of the House of Representatives.

The case was raffled over a year later and in March 29 Judge Ernie Tendero at the Quezon City Metropolitan Trial Court.

The House ethics committee voted to reprimand Gonzalez in January 2001. Of the 13 members present, six thought the penalty was too light and walked out of the closed-door session. The six then changed that the other committee members had broken a "gentlemen's agreement" to expel Gonzalez. Gonzalez's case was reprimand while three abstained.

Gonzalez pleaded "not guilty" when arraigned on Aug. 16, 2001.

Case status: The prosecution is still presenting its witnesses. On Sept. 24, a hearing was scheduled to accept the videotaped session of the slapping incident. But was postponed because the assistant for the accused arrived very late due to car accident. The hearing was rescheduled to Oct. 22.

B.L. Ilagan, PhilResearch

'Fire' in Filipino artists

SHARIFF MA. CUSHMING in his article, "Is the Press artist gone?" (PDI, 8/13/04) quoted the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra conductor Eugene F. Castillo as saying that Filipino artists lack fire. Castillo once quoted poet Robert Frost, "Fools what Fire cannot (it does) to build ends desire what fame lies."

And the statement further asked, "Which is the fire (of the Filipino artists)?"

My answer is the following pursuit: list of outstanding Filipino artists:

1. Florante Cecilio Jacob Ilita and last 10-time recipient of the Lawrence Zeki Meridol—the same award given to the Olivers and Kerry Schiffman—and awarded by the Chicago Sun Times as "one of the great floating saloons that cruises along one or two times in every generation").

2. Soprano Evelyn Mandac Dato and last Filipina to sing at the Metropolitan Opera and the first and the last to sing with opera king Placido Domingo).

3. Tenor Gionni Consuega Zhon and the last Filipino to sing Otello in Prague, Japan and the United States and San Domingo for his fan after searching the Filipino for the lead role of Rigoletto in Munich).

4. Singing sensors Lea Salonga (first and last Filipina to win the Tony Award in New York and the Olivier Prize in London).

5. Tenor Neal Watson (first and last Filipino winner of the Luciano Pavarotti International Voice Competition).

6. Baritone Andrew Fernando Jacinto (winner of a special prize in voice in New York, the same award given to the audience Jose, upon his debut.)

The list is long and I would like Castillo to refer to the encyclopedia of Filipino artists published by the Cultural Center of the Philippines where he is employed as the newly installed music director of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra.

If Castillo missed the fire that Liezl showed when the latter agreed to be her conductor in Butch Concerto in to Minor played last March 20 at the Ayala Tower One, then he must be looking for another kind of "fire" from the Filipino artists.

That kind of movement from a smoking officer of the CCP is, I think, enough why Castillo should be out on fire, literally.

—PERSEUS A. SORIANO,
Block 8, Lot 1, Jimmy's Avenue, Mayfunsa, Pasig City

Ignorant tree 'killers'

THE "MASSACRE of trees" last Aug. 23 at a government-owned property in Quezon City displayed ignorance of authority and disregard of due process, and irresponsible actions.

While, would it need anyone to hull-dozer thousands of tree saplings purposely put in place in bags? Certainly, the people who ordered their destruction are not aware of man's responsibility over the natural resources available to him. It takes years to grow a young tree, much more, a full-grown tree. But several persons fail grasps, mentalities of the importance of due process and urban regeneration, don't care about this.

Through the years, the Manila Seedling Bank Foundation did a noble task in preserving that area of land by planting its pieces on a temporary basis. Needless to say, the foundation's young trees survived as the ultimate guardians of the land and significantly contributed to the ecological balance in that part of the city for many years. How could anyone or one group reciprocate this lapse in our duties of lawful energy benefiting humanity with some forceful and destructive energy? When can our society achieve a commitment dream to a higher purpose in life, if certain groups mind the very basic and natural process of effecting change in the name of infrastructure development and progress?

The guidebook in living nature clearly states, "Where respect and reverence are extended to the eternal energy of nature, the universe will serve humanity with harmony and abundance."

—JOSEF C. CRUZ,
20 Columbia St.,
Loyola Grand Villas, Quezon City

Yes, there are priests living in poverty

DANDING C. Rapadas' thoughtful article, "Priests and poverty" (PDI, 8/27/04), was critical of priests and religious "who have long forsaken the ideals of the society and ministries idolized by our cohorts." But throughout the article, he painted an image of luxurious priests and religious, with lifestyles as extravagant as those of our politicians.

Rapadas' article has a commendable intention: The basis for the poor was obvious in his words and experience. But while I share most of his thoughts, I cannot agree with some of his views. I believe he made a sweeping judgment on all priests and religious, and I'm afraid that statement might unwittingly succumb to biased sentiments.

In the spirit of fairness, Rapadas should have mentioned that 50 percent of Filipino priests, especially those in Mindanao, are living with poverty and living simple lifestyles. They have to work for days to see Mass in many far-flung rural areas. After the Mass, they are served with "salugang sagang" or nothing at all, yet they are happy, so happy that they can participate in enjoying the comfort and luxuries that can only be found in the metropolis, as well as "the benefits after the God he or she serves."

Rapadas mentioned, in later worked article, some rare religious congregations in the remote wilderness of Mindanao, whose their lifestyles. He also accused them of not practicing "simplicity and austerity to animate to share promotion of poverty" for most have been working only with priests in the metropolis.

Rapadas has an inadequate understanding of poverty. Being poor does not simply mean materially deprived. We have to see the resources provided by God's providence to be effective means of God. We can see many churches in the dark ages, when priests have to use smoke signals to convey messages or info to us and to go to their destinations. Owning cars is a phobia of the latest model of a car with a famous brand name is not a criterion against poverty. Everyone tells us that equipment with those published brand names are often durable than those of inferior brands. The gadgets, equipment and facilities owned by religious priests are indeed useful for their apostolic ministries and can be used for a longer period of time than those that are less expensive. Owning a number of cell phones or a fleet of cars or a closet overflow of "a mere laptop or a high-end mobile phone," as Rapadas mentioned, is a desire is in up-to-date" is a clear distain of the promise of poverty. It is not a practice of austerity and simplicity it is beyond one's need.

—FR. LEONARD F. ORILLOSTAS,
Legal Aid of Archdiocese of Cebu,
Villamor Hi-Rise, Mona City

Lucky Filipinos

I ALMOST gulped upon reading the business in the drowning the salaries of GOCC executives. Tapping for the transfer bureaucrat head of Philippine National Oil Co. (reportedly, this man was the chief prosecutor during the impeachment case the president) against President Joseph Estrada, to [illegible] a plum office like PNOC, his take home pay was more than P3 million.

He currently provided us with some comic relief during the impeachment. But now at the same time, SOCC he must have been laughing his way to the bank. A simple calculation will tell you that what he earned for that post will take an ordinary Filipino more lifetimes to acquire. But we have no hearing about that work ethic for today.

Remember that Henry Aguino once about a friend of his saying how "rocky" Filipinos are?

We were "rocky" then as we are "rocky" now.

We overthrow a president who "robbed" us, and replaced him with officials who "rob" us now.

—JOSEPH Q. ANG
202 Kikai Ave., Caloocan City

Respect linguistic, cultural rights of the deaf

THERE are comments to the cover article written by Ms. Cooperon, "Deaf also mark National Language Month," (PDI, 8/30/04).

The Southeast Asian measures for the Deaf (SEAD) uses Signing Exact English or SEE, as an artificial sign system which is different from Filipino Sign Language (FSL). Therefore, the conferences and athletes of this school are SEE signers and they not all be users of FSL.

We would like to clarify that FSL is not based on the spoken or written languages of English or Tagalog. It is rather a visual sign language which developed naturally. Therefore it is not a sign of the unique and greatest manner of FSL. This difference can be seen in many countries of vocabulary and grammar used by the Filipino Deaf community.

The majority of the deaf population in the country does not understand Filipino because understand information on English is all alikpeia. Hi-fans in different to the deaf because they are not exposed to it enough in school. One can't blame the deaf if they don't understand the Filipino expressions for "love" such as ting, dinig or mahal. These are words unheard, used with Filipinos who can hear and their spoken conversations. Many signs and events in use are taken from the heart of deaf Filipinos. They come about and sometimes to be in use because they represent the thoughts, emotions and communication needs of the deaf. Do we deny them of knowing FIL spirit to know these signs?

FIL is very important to the Filipino Deaf community. Like Ilocanos, tourist may prefer about of the deaf. Because of the deaf, and a will to spread deaf Filipinos, leader says, "A deaf person is not handicapped if his or her linguistic and cultural rights are respected."

—MARITES BAGUIO, STELLIN-CORPUZ,
vice president,
Philippine Federation of the Deaf; Philippine Directors, ITE Elementary Project,
phildeaf@yahoo.com

Who's to blame for RP's fiscal mess?

DOES anyone (R) 39 kindergarten, we can pinpoint the most debilitating policies that led to the country's fiscal mess, but which nobody seems to remember. Cielo Magsaysay-Avenue is to blame. She can't point to anyone else but herself for this bad publicity.

The fundamental reason is her own lack of character and moral fortitude. With confirm and the government's deteriorating fiscal condition in the first few months after taxes were retrenched to end the nation's. It said that she was in no way ashamed of joining together a team of candidates who would have helped her save the fiscal mess, she came up with one whose nominees never picked essentially in consideration to their possible contribution to her chances of winning. Her winning was all that mattered.

It was one GMA's fault that Fernando Poe Jr. was compelled to run. (As everyone would've been aware of a disaster that GMA befriended Confederate in the Republican and Democratic/Cabs Conference of 1999, of which the Philippines is a signatory.

Marcos's fourth inclusion among other economic leaders of the progressive before embarking on the three administrations will need artificial means of consumption to achieve this. Unmasked or unplanned jump

Wrong prescription from Sec. Dayrit

THERE is a mention in Secretary Manuel Dayrit's recent statements that "It is not the Department of Health's responsibility to provide contraceptives." It offers saying that family planning is not part of DOH's constitute. Perhaps he has forgotten that family planning is one of the 10 elements of reproductive health as stated in the Reproductive Health Conference on Population and Development/Cairo Conference of 1994, of which the Philippines is a signatory.

Women's health includes having safe and wanted pregnancy before embarking on the time, oftentimes she will need artificial means of contraception to achieve this. Unwanted or unplanned pregnancies sometimes lead to unsafe, illegal abortions, further endangering women's health and even their lives. Pregnancy and childbirth are still among the leading causes of maternal mortality and morbidity, to decrease this mortality, health providers need to ensure safe motherhood and family planning.

Many of the latest abuse population and poverty. Let the health secretary take a realistic look at women's health. Let him review DOH's administrative order 01-S. 2000.

—LETHA RUTH CLEMENTE-CHUA, M.D.,
chair, Women's Advocacy Committee and past president, Philippine OB GYN Society

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the services of banks and other financial institutions, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th Floor, Chronicle Plaza, corner Pasong Tamo and Makati Ave., City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-0783, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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InqBox

Dear Readers, here is your comments, suggestions and views on today's issues on how it was delivered. Tell us about the things you want improved to play favorite news paper. Text INQBOX<space> text then key words + name + city/municipality and send to 2161 (Smart) or 2366 (Globe). The shortest keywords are indicated in the tops of each section.

Amid high oil prices, terrorists and the fiscal crisis, what helps or hinders you? What keeps you going?

What keeps me to keep going are my children. Seeing their smiles & hearing their laughter inspires me.
—Normel Magallanes, Baguio City

Liezel is a nice song will make me smile, singing with it definitely keeps me going! Finishing projects! Lively will also help. Don't worry I won't, life is too short.
—S. Tan, Manila

The dreams of 4 children inspire me 2 live despite these dilemmas, but I should write it if government 2 prioritize basic social services 2 effect change.
—R. Salvio, Angono

My children & it hope that the future be better economically and environmentally, as well as security areas.
—Lucy Gamboa, Dagupan, Bontoc

as a producer for tv, it would be of similar stories of courage like people share my time & how I can share these with everyone else. of TV-Filipino.
—Ryo Verona, QC

The fact that whenever I keep praying or will happen to keeps up and that God is always in control. Whatever our problem is, Jesus is with us.
—F. Gonzaga

Unique fact I have long as pray. Spiritual Way!
—Rommel, Manitou

my family, anyon lately my kids.
—Lucy Sol, Manila

for me, it's strength of Filipinos and resourceful ness. Especially our farmers who are practicing sustainable agriculture. I'm sure their produce is not...
—Jose Pamel, Bohol

my hospital bill and I should BS, then, because they make me realize that I can do something. Philippines that's how, after all, they're our responsibility.
—Girl D. Ledesma, Dagupan City

What keeps me going is my faith that I say, the Philippines as we know from this crisis & we become more unified. God bless us all. Let's be positive and proud. Hail, hail the Philippines mapagmahal.
—Betty Reyes, Tagaytay, Quezon

Filipinos are resilient people with the natural ability to laugh while looking at adversities / problems.
—Donalisa L. Ilgonas, Legaspi City

Having a regular job that will support my family's daily needs keeps me going. Seeing my family together helps me keep my sanity.
—Rufiyo de Jesus, Pantabangan

Always go on any for Miguel. Bien 12
—Ruhmond Uy, [illegible] CITY

What keeps me going is to struggle for God gave these 2 us because to learn life can surpass all of these.
—Anabelle Quinsola, Sariaya

those people who show honesty & courage despite constant situation. Determination & faith that him helping in His will provide own.
—Ramel Tobog, Manila

Some militant party-list representatives have protested the cut in their pork barrel. (Trim 35 million pesos each to just 10 million pesos each.) Is their protest valid or not?

Yes, it is. Strength of legislature's interests of unemployment on lot of society, not their party-list shall have their pork barrel assist. Let major raise is up!
—Willie Sanders, JC

NO. Their PROTEST is NOT valid. It only shows their TRUE colors, bumpin's concerned not to happen.
—Rodolfo Labarango, Lemay, Bataan

no use it computers their source of distributing if pork barrel system.
—Jimmy Leonardo, Isabel

no, not to those like this. they should be sensitive to the feelings of it community too.
—Gary Tan, Manila

their decision. pass along we both.—pipat lahat o hati bati
—jose gonzales, Bulacan

Pork barrel is valid. Since has other representative has, they were also included & others act part 4 every congressmen were relieved, it's just an unfair to simple them out...
—melba garcia, Tanauan City

Protest is NO, because 1.) they receive only small portion and 2.) one is community, eg. to build school buildings.
—ariel bueting, Iriga, Legaspi, Bataan

No — neighboring ang kanya. It increase not one — its a not and making of their militantness will be fruitless, their battle cry.
—nonna romero, Ilocos city

their protest not valid. Because its compliance to Senate's need. Their pork be diverted druggist. how can they do that if their PORK BARREL?
—edgar trigbad, Batangas

Their reason is valid as they know how 2 use their funds wisely.
—kristin. orthodox, QC

Pork barrel may it be enough amount or not... If not, spirit & used 4 the welfare of the poor. Then the poor will suffer and not get what is due them. Government officials should prioritize people and not their pockets 2 be enriched.
—elsie santos, paranaque city

protest not valid, their protest is a classic example of succumbing 2 dirty politics. As they chose the election, now they shout extortion.
—ROGER ZAMORA, BUTUAN CITY

No their protest is valid. Their pork barrel is actually a form of assistance for the people's money to specific. Lally Directed to their actions.
—pete, makati

Ad
Ad
Ad

Across the NATION

3 RP women enslaved in Sabah return

By Carla P Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Three of the four Negros women who said they were turned sex slaves in Sabah, Malaysia, have returned to the country.

But only Elma (not her real name) remained in Negros Occidental Sunday, as the law offices decided to stay in Manokan the same time because their stay allowed of what they had gone through.

The three said they would file charges against those responsible for turning them into sex slaves, including the three operators from Manila.

Among those to be included in the charges are some of the bar owners identified as Lenie and Francis Villanueva and Jean Bongay who brought the women to Sabah.

They may also include in the charges the owner of the bar to which Sabah identified only as Mr. Foo and Alex, both Malaysians but of Chinese descent and the Filipinos under their employ who helped force them into prostitution.

Elma, 27 and a native of Isabela town, Negros Occidental, said the Villanueva couple recruited them in Angeles to work as receptionists in a karaoke bar for 3,000 a month. Food, she added, was free.

But when they got to Sabah, they found they were forced into sex slavery to be made prostitutes.

She said they were not hogged and to be made to service clients but were not allowed to leave.

They said there are four Filipinas working at the karaoke. One of them was a woman from Bohol named Mabra, who made sure the 20 Filipino women working there did not escape.

Of the 20 women kept in the karaoke, four were Filipinas. Two were from Iloilo and the rest were from Manila, Zamboanga and General Santos City, said Elma.

She said Mabra fled, slipped and locked the women who remained in the room where they did not hurt. But Filipinos became wary to caught back.

Elma said they were only fed a meal per day and only in the evening. "We worked from 1 p.m. to 2 a.m. and some nights there were four to five customers," she said.

She said customers paid 180 ringgits for three hours to choose a woman to be with. They also charged 50 ringgits for short time and 500 ringgits for overnight work.

Elma said they ended up with, not any due to many deductions. Among them was the 20 ringgits a day for housing, on top of deductions for food and electricity.

"If we refused to work we were fined 50 to 1,000 ringgits and if a customer complained that the girl who received him smelled, she would also be fined," she said. One ringgit is equivalent to P14.83.

They also had to pay for their pills as well as the condoms of their customers. Those who got sexually transmitted diseases were also required to buy their medicines.

Unable to bear their conditions, Elma secretly sent a text message to Negros Occidental Vice Governor Jayvee and asked for help. Jayvee, in turn, sought the assistance of Bgy. Agusilo Agusilo Jr. (Negros Occidental, 5th District) because the women came from his district.

It was then sought the help of Malaysian officials who sent their police to rescue her in the operation.

The Malaysian police then conducted nightly raids on their bother for almost a week in search of them.

During the raids, their employer hid them in a locked room. But the police operations were too hot for business so their employer decided to release them and gave them tickets to return to the Philippines.

Elma said the women who were left behind assured to be rescued soon but they were also advised to tell their family what happened to them.

"It is not true that the others do not want to be rescued," she said.

100
A boy turns to the parking area of what used to be a Dunkin Donuts in Davao City, washing cars and running errands, for income to pay for some of his school needs.

Ex-assemblyman found murdered in Pampanga town

BACOLOR, Pampanga—The murder of former Arroyo administration Jose Cervantes on Sunday shattered the peace in Barangay Cabalantian as residents prepared to commemorate the 9th anniversary of the town's burial by Mt. Pinatubo's lahar on Oct 3.

Cervantes, holed in the country's outstanding farmers during the 1970s, was found sprawled dead inside the bathroom of his house on Zone 4 here.

Police reported finding seven stab wounds in his body, two of which were on his head. The suspect apparently used an ice pick.

Farmers in Cabalantian and other Bacolor villages rushed to his house on Monday to join the mourning.

Augusto Salazar, former agricultural director in Central Luzon and brother-in-law of Cervantes, said the victim helped farmers revive their fields.

After Lahar submerged Barangay Cabalantian in 1995—now known as the Cabalantian tragedy—Cervantes briefly settled in an evacuation center in Sasmuan.

But not for long. Cervantes said his father returned less than a year later and began rehabilitating his fishponds. This inspired farmers in Cabalantian to resume agricultural activities amid the harsh circumstances.

Mustering support for displaced farmers, Cervantes invited former President Fidel Ramos visit to show him that Bgy. Cabalantian is already thriving.

Cervantes also tapped the help of former Agricultural Secretary Leonardo Montemayor.

Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources personnel were among those who went to the wake on Monday.

Rosalina, the widow of Cervantes, said the killing occurred on the heels of island disputes that her husband recently won. Rosalie Ocampo, *PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Abra folk start drive to bring home OFW

BACOLOD CITY—Residents of Abra have started an online petition to repatriate a female OFW who died in Saudi Arabia on Aug. 2.

The body of Gemma "Ging" Idica Padol, originally from Bangued, Abra, is expected to be brought home because her employers cannot be found.

About 275 people have already signed the petition (ipetitions2) in www.ipetitions.com calling for the Department of Foreign Affairs to repatriate Padol's body.

"We are willing to bring home Ging from Riyadh to La Paz but each OFW can help us in managing to bring Ging to Manila," said La Paz Mayor Israel Bersola.

Bersola said Ging's employers, who have gone to exile hope through their mother's experience, have not been attending school now thinking about their mother's fate.

Padol worked as a domestic in Saudi since 1992. Her original employer married, leaving Padol to her new boss who, it turned out, refused to pay her.

He sought the help of the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) in Saudi Arabia in May or May a case against her new employer for non-payment of wages.

But while waiting for the decision last July, Padol suffered a stroke and was in a coma when the decision was handed in her favor.

The problem now is that the police cannot find her employer, it seems said.

Padol's cousin also said a Philippine Embassy official in Saudi had told them that if the employer would not be found they would have to seek the help of the Saudi officials to release the body from the morgue.

They would have to raise 8,000 Saudi riyals for the release.

The letter, entitled "Bring Ging Home," asked Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo to facilitate the repatriation of Padol's body. *Fronda Gimaino, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Ex-cop tagged in kidnap slain

BUTUAN CITY—A retired police official who was indicted for beheading alleged abductor of a kidnapping group here was also ambushed Sunday.

Senior Supt. Elvin Boden, city police chief, said the victim, former police Insp. Roland Barlera, was ambushed to death by a lone assailant near his residence in Buenavista Subdivision.

Barlera's house is just in front of the Butuan Police Precinct.

The suspect, who fled on foot, remained at large.

Angco said he could not discount the possibility that Barlera's ouster was behind the killing. *Franklin Caligpal, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Suspect in TV anchor's slay held

By Nestor P Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Police arrested a hairdresser believed to be one of four suspects who robbed and killed a television news anchor in Roxas City.

A Iloilo Police Metropolitan District police station and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) arrested Jessie Amit, 25, at his house in Barangay Bolilo in Molo district Roxas's post midnight Monday.

Police recovered two 12-gauge shotguns and several bullets in a house of Damasa Iona (mother) in Iloilo.

Insp. Deodato Descargar, Metropolitan police chief, said they believed one of the guns was used in the shooting of Christopher Mosqua, 29, news anchor in the Roxas news program of GMA-7 Iloilo.

Senior Supt. Policarpio Segarino, Iloilo City police director, said Amit was identified by Mosqua's companion Ms. Theresa Barabar as among those who attacked them.

Supt. Jose Jorge Gorpas, CIDG regional chief, said they also had witnesses who could identify the four as one from the driving seat, the remaining suspects.

The police are set to file robbery and homicide charges against the suspects, said Gorpas.

"The case is about 90 percent solved," Segarino told reporters.

Mosqua and Barabar were attacked around 1 a.m. Thursday in Barangay San Rafael in Mandurriao District. The robbery took two cellular phones and P500 cash from the victims.

The victims were on their way to Jaro District and took a shortcut through a dirt road where the robbers approached for an that they were riding

JI operatives stalked Davao, say PNP execs

By Jeffrey Tupas
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—At least four suspected Jemaah Islamiyah operatives had sneaked into this city days before the visit of President Macapagal-Arroyo last week.

Col. Edmundo del Rosario, commander of the Task Force Davao, said they received reports about the presence of the JI members days before the President's visit here for the Mindanao Business Conference on Sept. 16.

He said the suspected terrorists came from Central Mindanao. He, however, did not elaborate.

Early this month, the Inquirer reported JI activities in Central Mindanao, particularly in areas supposed to be controlled by the rebel group Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Police intelligence

The report, based on police intelligence, said the JI with foreign and local members, was planning to bomb either or both the cities of Davao and General Santos.

An intelligence officer of the police office in Central Mindanao said the suspected JI members have also been training local rebels on the manufacture of bombs using car batteries.

The report came while leaders of MILF called on their members to be vigilant against the possible entry of JI operatives in their areas following the deadly attack on the Australian Embassy in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta.

Del Rosario said the JIs terror plans were thwarted by surveillance and early action.

He said the JI members left a day after Mrs Arroyo's visit to the city.

WEALTH IN TRASH
A scrap materials collector takes a rest on a sidewalk in Davao City after scouring the city's streets for trash that could translate into income.

Davao City trash end up in Davao Gulf

DAVAO CITY—Mountains of garbage from Davao City have been swamping the nearby island of Samal, less than 2 km away, threatening marine life in the Davao Gulf.

"Everyday, we are confronted by mounds of floating garbage from the sea," Island Garden City of Samal Mayor Rogelio Amolan said in an environment summit here.

"We spend several hours a day just cleaning them up," he added.

Amolan said the garbage come from Davao City and reach as far as the Talikud Island several kilometers away.

"Lately, we're thinking of deploying boats to clean garbage up. But when will this garbage dumping end?" he said.

Davao City Councilor Leonardo Avelino said the city has been waging a war against garbage, by leading a clean up drive along tributaries of the city satellite but despite the 40 dump trucks collecting garbage in the city everyday, some of the trash still find their way to the seas.

"What is only common in these chat problems about the environment cannot just be treated in isolation," said Jose Maria Lorenzo Tan, president of the Philippine Wild Fund Phils.

Tan said the whale that was beached on the shores of Talicud Island here earlier this year had swallowed plastic bags coming from six countries in the world, showing how the garbage you throw in Vietnam or Thailand can finally find their way here.

Plastics found in the belly of the long-finned pilot whale discovered beached in Talicud in February this year came from as far as Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Hong Kong.

Since this whale species is not a migrating type, it was the plastics that found their way to the Davao Gulf in the whale, and not the other way around, Tan said.

Mintok Lowey, mayor of Sta. Cruz, including Davao, an tourist the Davao Gulf, one of the country's 10 largest fishing grounds.

Tan said 10 species of whales and dolphins live here, and so do leatherback turtles and the Japengo (sun-nose), listed among the world's threatened species in the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species.

Gerardino Lacuesta, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Balangiga clash remembered today

By Vicente S. Labro
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Hundreds are expected to flock to Balangiga, Eastern Samar to attend the commemoration rites for the 103rd anniversary of the Balangiga Encounter of 1901 when revolutionaries almost wiped out the American detachment based in the coastal town.

The celebration will be simple, said Benita Morante, Department of Tourism director for Eastern Visayas.

The commemoration program would be held this morning at the municipal plaza where the 19-million Balangiga Encounter Monument and Memorial Library designed by national artist Napoleon Abueva now stands.

The memorial depicts the scene when the Filipino revolutionaries were about to attack the American soldiers, with life-size statues and a replica of the church bells, among others.

In the afternoon, there would be a reenactment of that historic event at the Balangiga central elementary school, which would be participated in by some town officials, high school students and people.

Eastern Samar Rep. Marivilor Libanan, Antonio Eviar Tan, Ben Evardone, and Balangiga Mayor Catalino Castrodes would be in Balangiga to welcome guests and visitors.

Considered as the "worst single defeat" of the Americans during the Philippine-American War, the Balangiga Encounter was participated in by some 500 residents of Balangiga who bravely fought the well-armed Americans.

Indons make most of porous RP border

From page A1

nands of Indonesians who have migrated to Malaysia, and many go back and forth across the unfortified border with impunity.

And about anything that can be bought cheaply in Indonesia—from pirated DVDs to ecstasy to flour (the latter even exotic animals are smuggled into Malaysia).

More worrying for Wapenaj, jobless also call them arsis and they are often better armed and equipped than the Coast Guard.

These days, thinly stretched local security forces are also under pressure to keep a watchful eye on a more deadly target—Muslim militants from Indonesia.

The Bali bombers Mukhlas and Amrozi were members of the group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) were highlighted some years by reports that one of the two main suspects in the recent bombing outside the Australian Embassy in Jakarta had trained in General Mindanao.

Security officials believe hundreds of JI operatives have used Mindanao as a training base and refuge, drawn by its lawless jungles and mountains where four separate Moro rebel groups have set up bases of Savyaf and carry in the Muslims, Page A16.)

Tracking down the militants has been made more difficult by their apparent links with elements of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the main rebel group in Mindanao.

Blending

But like JI militants are also able to blend in with thousands of Indonesians who have made Malaysia their home.

Officials say there are 110,000 to 115,000 Indonesians in Sabah alone, most of their concentrated on islands off the coast, in villages around cities such as Kota Kinabalu, the state capital.

Many of the 35,000 Indonesians cast their votes in the first round of Indonesian presidential elections in July, although only a handful of Indonesian residents are considered legal aliens under Philippine law.

Indonesia has been a cheap source of farm labor since the 1970s when illegal migrants first South Sulawesi worked to increase plantations and rice mills in Mindanao. Many also entered as laborers in helpers. Later, many were employed in the construction.

Mindanao is viewed as a promised land by Indonesians from remote parts of North Sulawesi. "Life is much, much better here," said Mansur Hasibuddin, who left his home on Sangir island off North Sulawesi in 1966 after a powerful volcanic eruption.

"We're better off here because it's easy to find a job and the pay is much higher than in Indonesia," he added.

Only one home

For Indonesians with an entrepreneurial spirit, opportunities abound in Mindanao.

Cheap consumer products from South Sulawesi are brought in by Philippine-born Indonesians operating small boats, hopping from one island to another peddling pirate, pirated discs, kerosene and diesel.

"I can get a 4-liter container of kerosene for less than half of the going prices here," Mendoyako told Reuters. "But I can only bring in small amounts because my boat is small."

Mendoyako has two boats, registered by his two sons, that shuttle between Mindanao and Indonesia's Sangir Island, a 14-hour trip in fair weather.

Numerous arrests over the years to get the Indonesians to register or send their home have failed.

Immigration officer Ramon Mawarden said the Philippine government had no clear policy on how to deal with the growing number of undocumented Indonesians.

"These people have nowhere to go home to in Indonesia," Mawarden said. "They know only one home—that's here in Mindanao."

Reuters

Early gov't retirement plan backed, whacked

From page A1

Two party-list representatives are also against the program aimed at downsizing the bureaucracy.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile pointed out that he wanted the early retirement plan no longer top officials rather than the rank-and-file given the "top heavy bureaucracy."

About 23,000 employees, or 2 percent of the 1.1-million-strong bureaucracy, are expected to avail themselves of the program, according to Ebdane. Judy Industrial Authority (NIA) has the most retirement benefit of P899,000 P90 billion divided 33,000).

The bonanza is in addition to the regular retirement package granted by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS). Public school teachers, policemen and soldiers are excluded from the program.

In a statement, the Department of Budget and Management clarified the report that P1 million would be given to every government employee who opted for the early retirement package.

"I don't know where they got the P1 million per retiree figure. As far as the rationalization program is concerned, it is not yet known how much each retiree will get, definitely, it will not be P1 million," Secretary Emilia Boncodin said.

Boncodin said the retirement benefit would depend on the employees' salary and the number of years they had served. Those who do not meet the requirements, she said, would receive a minimum incentive of P90,000.

"If we will give P1 million as a retirement package to each employee affected by the rationalization program, it would be unfair to those employees who have served the government longer than the new employees," she said.

Moreover, Boncodin said, the package was not open to all employees, but "only those employees in departments or agencies whose functions are redundant or no longer relevant."

The affected employees may also opt to be transferred to another government agency, she said.

Boncodin said there were no estimate yet on the number of employees to be affected by the plan because it was voluntary.

Neophyte Sen. Manuel Roxas II said he would endorse the plan "as long as it would generate real savings, as advertised by budget officials."

The plan should also call for a "strict freeze on the hiring of new government employees in order to fully pursue the cut savings," he said.

Around 60 percent of the national budget goes to the salaries of government officials and employees, one of the highest such allocations in the region.

Personnel services (government salaries) accounted for 4.6 percent of the gross domestic product in 2003, compared with 3.8 percent in Indonesia (2000), 3.2 percent in Malaysia (1997), 3.3 percent in Singapore and 5.9 percent in Thailand.

Makes sense

Roxas said the retirement plan "makes a lot of sense from the point of view of a businessman.

"Years if the government loses 50 percent of the P50 billion (intended to fund the plan), or P15 billion, at the end of the year, it would still be a sound investment since the money would be generating a 25-percent return in terms of year savings," he said.

The GSIS has set aside P15 billion for the program, while the national government will get the balance of P15 billion from a P300-billion levy from the Stabilization.

Under the plan, employees who served at least 40 years would get the equivalent of a month's pay per year of service, while those who served less than 40 years would get 75 percent of their monthly pay, and those with less than 20 years would get 50 percent.

"Employees affected by the rationalization plan who may watch the notice to will get the regular retirement package from the GSIS plus an incentive package which will be paid for by the national government," Boncodin said.

The retirement package is part of President Macapagal-Arroyo's commitment in her State of the Nation Address in July "to reorganize government and provide clear parameters for redundancy offices."

He stressed she wants a "lean and mean bureaucracy."

Cup of bonbek

Bienvenido Cuize, president of the Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage), said the retirement package—a cup of bonbek—is not enough.

"The figures being dangled may look enticing at first, but once an employee has availed himself of it, only then will the truth be known. The early retirement plan of the administration is a ruse—a sugarcoated bitter pill meant to entrench the personnel of the bureaucracy and abandon basic social services," Cuize said in a statement.

He said that if the plan to tap the GSIS fund for the early retirement package, "the administration and fund abuse issues raised against GSIS with Winston Garcia as its fallen hero yet to be settled, now government will once again dig its hands into your funds."

Cuize recalled what happened to employees of the former Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, Economic Intelligence and Investigation Bureau and National Home Corp. who availed themselves of early retirement packages.

Up to now, the workers had yet to receive their benefits in full while some had yet to receive their retirement pay, according to the Courage official.

Party-list Rep. Liza Maza (Gabriela) said the early retirement plan would have highly qualified women to transfer to private firms or return to domestic work.

Maza said the plan, along with Arroyo's economic measures, must be resisted because it would spell disaster for workers.

Salary increase

For his part, party-list Rep. Benjamin Magsaysay Jr. of Mangudadatu said the proposed reengineering package should instead be realigned to increase the salaries of rank-and-file.

Magsaysay said that for the government to achieve an efficient bureaucracy, it should motivate its workforce by paying them well and including in them the values of competence and efficiency.

"The government's proposed retirement package is a sound effort, but if it is aimed at the efficiency of the bureaucracy, Mr. Arroyo is doing it the wrong way," he said.

Magsaysay said the package should be voluntary and not selective. He said it was wrong to exempt public school teachers, policemen and soldiers from the offer.

In the Senate, Enrile said expenses the government should retire "people in the higher echelons" and that underemployees and assistant secretaries "should be the first to go.

"It's high time the thinning out at the top because those people can easily find a job, or can be self-employed or be entrepreneurs not the rank-and-file who require their jobs to sustain their families," Enrile said.

The opposition senator noted that when he was in the defense, justice and finance departments, only two undersecretaries were assigned there and this was enough.

If officials are ready to retire, they should not be rehired as chargé d'affaires or Supreme Court justices to the bodies of government," Enrile said.

Boncodin said the retirement plan should have clear and definite guidelines.

"We have to ensure fairness. We have to avoid favoritism, discrimination and all sorts of problems that might beg the implementation of the plan," he said in a statement.

Roxas said the government should ensure "balance" in the retirement plan. "We might end up sending a lot of brilliant civil servants and keeping the mediocrities," Rhea Inquirer and Veronica Bordadora

DepEd blinks, to correct errors in history book

From page A1

ous reported errors in a history textbook being used by several year might school students.

They also named consultancy counsel Marites Schoot academic supervisor Antonio Calipjo Sr., who had played a newspaper ad on Sept. 20 alleging $12 errors in the 316-page "Area: Soon, Nguyen at as Binalonan (Asia: Then, Now and in the Future)."

"In the interest of truth and fairness, if there are mistakes or inaccuracies that need to be corrected, we are willing to do that," Education Secretary Florencio Abad announced at a news conference yesterday.

He dismissed reports of his letter stating its to share with Department of Education officials the $2-page list of errors he had compiled.

Abad wrote: "We believe it would be meaningful and productive for us to meet and discuss your allegedlist of series of fact or interpretation in the book, so that the Department of Education can take action on them, if warranted."

Until Friday, officials were adamant against submitting that a DepEd-approved textbook contained so many mistakes.

The authors—Dr. Rodolfo Nicon, Evelina Vilmia and Ruth Fuentes (the fourth, Remedios Quincy, is deceased)—have said Go "manufactured or fabricated" the alleged errors.

Yesterday, neither Abad nor Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz addressed their earlier accusation that Go had "malicious intent."

Correction notes

But no way was DepEd recalling the textbook: 3,34 million copies in some 5,000 public high schools. History textbooks were due for replacement in October 2005 anyway, the officials said.

"You can imagine [that] recalling them would be quite impractical," Luz explained over the "recalling our perfectly good textbook is a better way of [making the corrections]," he said.

Reached by phone, Go said the DepEd's move was "a good sign."

But he said he would still demand an apology for the accusation that there was "malicious intent" in the list of errors he gave to the publishers, Vibal Publishing and SD Publications.

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"Sayo Nasir, Kapatas at si Undersecretary" was approved by DepEd in 1997, 1999 and 2001—before Abad, Luz and Undersecretary Fe Hidalgo, who is now in charge of the review, assumed office.

Abad said he was open to the idea of reviewing all public school textbooks. "If that's not only my decision to do, if the same observations are presented to us," he said.

He admitted that after a succession of the book in question, DepEd officials found only "major mistakes." He did not say what is, but he promised that list of errors would "look not just [one], the book itself but [also into] the process that were two in [approval]."

History repeats

Ernesto, Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo has asked the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission to investigate the officials who endorsed and approved the book.

Ocampo, a former journalist, said those officials should be treated like suppliers of substandard military helmets and materials for public works construction. In fact, he said, instructions of tools that led schoolchildren wrong. Indicated by counsel" longer-lasting damage to the country.

The lawmaker claimed that the problems of public school textbooks before with mistakes should have been completely remedied as early as 1996, when the first such reports surfaced during the 10th Congress.

He recommend that, after cases of public hearings on these initial complaints, the House committee on education established that members of the Instructional Materials Council, the department's official textbook evaluators, had committed "gross negligence."

The committee did not recommend the filing of criminal charges against the education officials. Ocampo recommend, only because then Secretary Rosendo Otoña issued an apology and ordered the pulling of 36 titles found to have "glaring errors" in facts, grammar, concepts and illustrations.

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'Condom king' undaunted by Church stand

From page A1

behind me you?" Government statistics are usually lower than the actual figures, health officials because "it's part of the stage of denial."

In the Philippines, the Department of Health's HIV/AIDS registry shows only 2,121 persons living with AIDS (HIV/AIDS), a third of them overseas Filipino workers, partners, family members. International health agencies, however, say the real figures could be three times as high as the official count.

"It only because of this, Herbal said, citizens, especially the OFWs, should stop looking to government for action, and start community initiatives. "Forget about the government," he said. "Action has to come from below. Leadership will have to come from somewhere else."

Education drive

He said the key to rooting out HIV/AIDS was to educate people, including children, and Dinos actively involving them in the campaign.

In the past, he had launched condom-blowing contests among schoolchildren, who were later tested with coaching on HIV/AIDS and distributing condoms to households in the province.

In his country, Herbal said, taxi drivers in the capital are given condoms to offer to passengers, especially those bound for the red light district. He said the cabbies are also given tapes on HIV/AIDS that they would play during the ride.

His suggestion: "Involve taxi and jeepney drivers here. Be creative. Involve children, and offenders. Anyone who can affect behavior must be involved or else it will be a foolish disaster that even the doomsayers will not be able to handle."

More recently, Mercado said, a Chinese businessman AIDS Commission was formed in his country to ensure that the promises made by Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra during the 15th International AIDS Conference in Bangkok in July were fulfilled.

Among other things, he said, Thailand pledged to provide medical treatment for all PWMs, and to treat all drug users with AIDS/AIDS as patients, not criminals.

He urged Filipinos to have a similar change in mindset in the at HIV/AIDS situation here—check the accuracy of statistics and the "human rights condition" among PLWAs.

"We don't need political posture," Mercado said, "just [the political will to do what is right and the government what is really happening."

All-time low: P56.45-$1

From page A1

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Armando Tetangco Jr. said that the peso "is expected to improve with better foreign exchange inflows starting October."

Pressure

"Pressure came from month-end and quarter-end demand plus slightly weaker regional currencies," Tetangco said.

The peso opened at 56.39 and depreciated throughout the day to close at the intra-day low of 56.45 to the dollar at a volume of $135.5 million.

Unfazed

Midcourtship was unfazed by the country and decline of the peso.

"We continue this on the seasonal peak in demand for dealers in anticipation of the Christmas season," Peter Inciong's Ignacio Bunye said.

Bunye expressed optimism the peso would bounce back. "We expect the inflow of overseas Filipino workers' funds during the last quarter which should even things out."

Traders said the peso was weighed down by maturing oil payments and other quarter-end corporate requirements.

Currency traders said trading at the Philippine Dealing System in the past few days was adversely affected by maturing instruments under the Currency Risk Protection Program (CRPP) of the BSP.

Forward contract

The CRPP facility is a nondeliverable forward contract (NDF) between the BSP and a commercial bank with the foreign exchange obligations of the latter's clients as the underlying transaction.

The facility was intended to relieve the pressure on the spot market created by market players wanting to front-load their future foreign currency requirements and by borrowers wanting to cover foreign currency obligations.

The opening of the CRPP in December 1997 did much to restore calm to the foreign exchange market in the following years. Its coverage was expanded in December 2000 to include oil imports.

Spot market

However, traders said that during the settlement of maturing CRPPs, banks would still have to buy from the spot market. They said a lot of these instruments were maturing in recent days, thus adding to the demand for the greenback.

Hedge

One trader said a big portion of the maturing CRPPs was meant to hedge against rising oil prices.

"Remember that the country's oil bill has doubled. Last year, the oil price was only at $24.827 per barrel, but now it has reached $46.643," said Equitable PCI Bank chief dealer Manolo Apra, who is the president of the Association Cambiste International Philippines chapter.

"Last year, I remember that the regular dollar requirement for oil imports was about $250 million. Now, this has risen to $500 million," Apra said.

Intervention unlikely

However, he said the $6.45 support for the peso would likely hold, especially because the BSP had the capability to arrest the depreciation if it wanted to. Even if the all-time low were breached, a free fall was not likely to happen...he said.

"At $6.50, the dollar has reached its overbought level," Apra said.

He said that despite the peso depreciation yesterday, the market did not see any intervention from the BSP.

"It did not appear necessary because the depreciation was not too big," he said.

Investor confidence

Lim Goomee, economist at ING Barings Securities, said a temporary peso depreciation would not harm the local corporate sector.

He said the peso depreciation did not seem to dampen investor confidence because the local stock market and even the bond market for Philippine risk were doing well.

Rising oil prices

Lamberte agreed with the observation that the rising oil prices were a bigger factor behind the depreciation than the narrowing of interest-rate differential between the Philippines and the United States following another 25-basis-point cut in key rates by the US Federal Reserve.

"I believe our risk premium has narrowed significantly since the CRAs (rating agencies) downgrade, but we can't do anything about the rising oil prices," Lamberte said.

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Special food lanes for veggie trucks

By Margaux C. Ortiz

STARTING next week, owners of vegetable trucks in Metro Manila will be able to avoid the black box.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) yesterday signed a memorandum of agreement establishing 24-hour food lanes for agricultural and fishery products.

With the food lanes, the vegetable trucks would be exempted from the anti-ban undergarment scam.

"This is a breakthrough because most people are unaware of the logistics of food transport," Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said in a press conference yesterday at the MMDA office.

Yap said only four percent of the annual price of a particular agricultural product goes to the farmers, while the rest is for transport and retail costs.

DA official Salvador Salonga said that under the existing set-up, trucks were in gasoline stations in Carmona or while the ban is in effect.

Salonga said they recorded 30 percent of post-harvest losses because of spoilage.

"With the food lanes, we would be able to reduce those losses and increase the farmers' income," Salonga said.

Eleuterio Bongcaran of the Bicol Lanzon Agri-Fishery Group said the food lane project would give the boys for the countrywide flow of vegetable supplies from the provinces part of the Cordillera Administrative Region to Metro Manila, the Visayas and Mindanao.

"Before this agreement, farmers had to wait for the proper time to transport their products for fear of spoilage," Bongcaran said.

Lyndon Tan, who represented vegetable growers from Tagaytay, said the project would ultimately benefit consumers because the prices of vegetables could go down by as much as 25 percent.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said they would ensure that only accredited vegetable trucks would be given special stickers to prevent non-vegetable vehicles from transporting contraband and illegal products in the metropolis.

"The violators of the food lanes would have a minimum of five to three Manila traffic," he added.

The MMDA approved four alternate routes for the project, Fernando said.

Trucks could pass from the NLEX to A. Bonifacio then onward to Balintawak, go back to A. Bonifacio, passing through C-3, then left to R-10 going straight to Divisoria.

Trucks could also pass from NLEX to A. Bonifacio, take a U-turn to Chronicle then right to Quezon Highway then right to Trading Post Avenue going to Independencia right to Gilo, all the way to C-5, then to the Southtown Lakes Expressway (SLEX).

The MMDA also approved the route from SLEX to A. Bonifacio. Trucks could take a U-turn to Chronicle then right to Quezon Highway, right to Trading Post Avenue then right to Mindanao Avenue, left to North Avenue to Elliptical Road going to Don Mariano Avenue to University Avenue, straight to C-5 Circumferential to Balintawak exit right to Gilo, all the way to C-5 to GLEX.

RES-HARROWING encircling cries: Horacio Acosta (left) cradles in relief (but by other police captors) his cousin, Bernadito Macaraeus (right) who took Acosta hostage inside their home in Sta. Cruz, Manila yesterday. (STORY ON PAGE A2)

What he did for love

By Lira B. Saberon

UNREQUITED love drove Bernadito Macaraeus to hold his cousin hostage for four hours yesterday after a weekend-long drinking session failed to thaw his grief.

Fortunately for both, the incident ended peacefully after Macaraeus' cousin, Herculano Acosta, managed to slip away when the suspect reached for a bottle of water as negotiations for his surrender with police were ongoing, Macaraeus, a father of an auto supply store, was subsequently grabbed by police who had surrounded their house.

Macaraeus held the 22-year-old bride at knife point and had refused to let him out of their house on Old Antipolo Street.

Hedda Sekio, who shares the house with the two men, both his cousins, said the two had been drinking beer since Saturday. Around 11 p.m. of Sunday, Macaraeus started to get emotional and was crying off into space, she said.

Acosta later called Sekio's attention, saying that Macaraeus was poking a knife at him and had told him not to leave the room. Macaraeus then grabbed Acosta and wrapped a sleeping two-year-old child, a daughter of his cousin's cousin.

Police used a Special Weapons and Tactics team armed around 6 a.m. to ask Macaraeus to give up. Later, the suspect informed Sekio he intended to speak to his mother in Sorsogon City. As he reached out to a cell phone and a bottle of mineral water, Acosta escaped from his cousin's grip. The suspect was immediately subdued by police. Macaraeus admitted that he had been upset when he found out that his girlfriend was set to marry another man.

Still dazed from the experience, Acosta said the incident had loaded up his schedule for the week scheduled for a job interview yesterday at a department store in Cubao. He did not make it to the appointment.

An appeal from Strunk

By Philip C. Tubeza

BOB LAUREN STRUNK, facilitated of slain actress Nida Blanca, has asked the Court of Appeals to reconsider its decision denying his petition to quash the murder case against him for the killing of the actress in November 2001.

Strunk, through his lawyers, said that the appellate court erred in saying that the state judicial confession of his co-accused, Philip Medel Jr., could be used as corroborative evidence against him. Strunk is now in the Bilibid prison.

The case filed almost two years ago in the Pasig City Regional Trial Court had not progressed, with the prosecution presenting only two witnesses, he said.

He added that proceeding with the case with "shaky evidence" would be an injustice to him.

Slay suspect no stranger to jail

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE MAIN suspect in the killing of journalist Ivan Villanueva's bodyguard in and out of jail for the past five years.

Villanueva, assistant business editor of Today, was stabbed in the neck inside a passenger bus in Pasay City Thursday midnight when he refused to give his cell phone to robbers.

Rommel Cajucom, 21, accused of stabbing Villanueva, had been charged with several crimes since 1999.

He was arrested Friday afternoon while playing basketball on Leveriza Street, Barrio Santa Rosa, Pasay City.

Chief Insp. Joaquin Alva said Cajucom has several pending cases in various branches of the Regional Trial Court in Pasay City. Only last Sept. 3, he was released after posting a P100,000 bail for a robbery case.

Alva said Cajucom also has a pending case in court, but was allowed bail after his lawyer succeeded in having the charge downgraded to homicide for the killing of Wilfredo Cleto in Nov. 23, 2003. The suspect is also involved in a drug-related case pending before the Regional Trial Court Branch 118 in Pasay City filed in June this year.

Senior Insp. Jose Gobeth, city police intelligence chief, identified the two other accused suspects as Henry Lizardo, 24, and Gerry Cecilio, 26, residents of Pasay City.

They were positively identified by five witnesses: a bus passenger, the bus driver and conductor, a pedicab driver and a barangay kagawad.

Supt. Cir. Chief prosecutor Feliciano Bautista and Che Borja, who have been charged with robbery and homicide, could face "the penalty of reclusion perpetua to death" as provided in Article 294 of the Revised Penal Code.

Lizardo and Cecilio, alleged to be members of the Bigas Bigas Spanish gang, would also be charged with illegal possession of explosives and deadly weapons. No bail has been recommended for the three.

MetroBriefs

3 die in QC fire

A FACTORY making hot ribbons were doused to death after they were trapped inside their burning house early yesterday morning in Quezon City. The victims were identified as Conge Dalubhiga, 33, his daughter Sarah, 15, and his son Aldwin, 8, all of Old Manila Avenue corner Cordillera, Barangay Sauyo Fatio. Initial investigation showed that the fire broke out from the ground floor residence of the Dalubhigas, which served as the factory and residence. The ground floor housed Dalubhiga's upholstery shop, where the second partition floor served as the victims' residence. The apartment was owned by a certain Concordia but leased by Dalubhiga. The fire quickly spread since combustible upholstery materials were stocked inside the apartment. Firefighters arrived the blaze after two hours, and damage was estimated at about P1 million. Investigators said they have yet to determine the exact cause of the fire. Some witnesses claimed that a blackout preceded the blaze of the building, allegedly set on fire by still unknown suspects, could have ignited the blaze. Authorities are now also ruling out faulty electrical wiring as the cause of the fire.

Cecil C. Suerte

Gastro kills 1, downs 9

A MAN from Bohol, Bicol has killed a 13-year-old girl and forced nine others—mostly children—to the hospital. Dr. Edward Dy, chief of the Bicol Medical Center in Naga City, said the victims suffered from gastroenteritis and convulsions, according to Dr. Arthur Dy, chief of the emergency room. Symptoms of the sickness include abdominal pains and watery stools. If untreated, dehydration, which in turn could cause the death of a patient. The two people identified the four fatality as Elizabeth Sarita, 13, of Sitio Balogan, Barangay San Jose Abas, rushed to the hospital were Rosemarie Gorgue, 2; Rhizzah Gorgue, 7; Rhea Gorgue, 14; Rizzah Mae Bandoy, 8; and Dr. Ado Abellanosa, 7; Alexander David, 7 months old; Jocelle Bonanno, 7 months old; Ronnel Bonano, 4; and Catherine Pante, 12. Except for Bonano and Bonano, who are from Barangay San Roque, the rest are from Sitio Balogan, hospital officials said. Police said some of the parents in the area had allowed the four children to drink milk obtained from a dead carabao. Health officials warned that they got from the cattle.

Lolgie del Fourte

17th Negros trade fair

THE CORPUS is preparing the city's doors to receive early Oct. visitors (shoppers), as well as corporate and other buyers, at the Kasa Negrosanga. Scheduled 1 Ayala Center, Makati City from Sept. 30 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily beginning Thursday, Sept. 30, this four-day fair promises new products, designs and trade info. Participants looking to the 17th edition promotion of Negros Producers (ASP), Inc. the host of Negros—housewares, gifts, fashion accessories, apparel, linens, furniture and gadgets. The fair also promises investment opportunities and destinations to visit. Those interested to enjoy their holiday shopping spree conducted to join the small-medium and entrepreneurial trade see Oct. 3. For inquiries, call Rosalind Gil-Lim (02) 818-0000 or Manila (02) 8251-0000.

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LoveMall!

United also stars in 'Terminal'

UNITED: So how can planes who find us if they spend their whole lives at the airport? Let's relate to Steven Spielberg's new film, "The Terminal." Screenwriter Sacha Gervasi, with United International Pictures through Solar Entertainment Corp., released the movie earlier this month.

Gervasi's Zeta-Jones plays a United flight attendant while Tom Hanks portrays a passenger who gets stuck in limbo when he arrives at an airport in New York.

The producers approached United last year for suggestions, which the airline provided in the form of props, costumes, announcements, interiors and perspectives on the industry. In return, United gets plenty of air time in the movie. It is the most prominent airline in the film.

About 40 United employees from Los Angeles served as extras, some dressing in their actual United uniforms.

United worked with the producers and production team to craft the look and logistics of its mock airport. The airline advised the producers on passenger flow, the look of the check-in area, the information screens and the ways at the gates, and signs around the concourse.

United popped and installed Tony Dawkins' mock and gate readers but not on the set and arranged for the producers to rent United's 14 flight kitchens.

United dubbed in Manila sponsored an advanced screening of "The Terminal" last Sept. 2 at Robinsons Movieworld Galleria.

Check with your favorite theaters to know Manila to learn how to send a message and read ours to us IA on United Airlines.

My birthday thank-you list

ready $1-million credit for me.

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SPORTS

E-mail sr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Teodoyos S. Melendres

Bondad relative lambasts NGAP

By Marvong B. Castillo

A RELATIVE of Ivanna Bondad yesterday blasted the National Golf Association of the Philippines for dropping the reigning RP Ladies' champion from the 58-nd American Espirag shop so what it said was conflict with her schedule in Australia.

"It is not true that the schedule of tournaments for World Amateur will interfere with her schooling. She was granted a leave from school for two and a half months just to play for the Philippine team," said Dinah Briones, an aunt of Bondad, in Filipino.

"What happened is that they (NGAP) did not exert enough effort to help her (Ivanna) secure her Philippine passport when she has all the documents. Bad they requested beforehand."

Briones has been talking with NGAP officials since Bondad, who is an honor student, received the invitation to play in Puerto Rico. She added Ivanna was secured of an RP passport by the BGAD as early as last month.

Bad Ilo-ayoon has billed a long State and the NGAP later required Bondad's parents to appear before the Bureau of Immigration for authentication purposes.

Bondad was born in Los Angeles and grew from with her parents in Australia.

She holds both an American and an Australian passport but she would have been eligible for the RP team had she been able to secure a Philippine passport.

"They could have taken this to Malacañang if they wanted."

BONDAD

But Lilanie Fernandez of the NGAP said Bondad's parents went to Miami

"She really wanted to make Bondad a principal member of the team. But parents not being able to make it have spelled the difference," he said.

Meanwhile, a five-man RP team composed of Ivanna Bondad, Pelden Garcia, Celen Castañeda, Bing Bunyi and Iggy Gervacio will see action starting today in the Asia Pacific Amateur Championship at the Raffle Country Club in Singapore.

The tournament will be played over 54 holes with teams from the United States and New Zealand as favorites.

New UAAP criteria for coach

By Jeanine W. Poyo

THE COACH of the Year award automatically goes to the winning mentor of the Far Eastern University. Dr. Lo Sole throughout this Thursday for the UAAP senior basketball championship at the Araneta Coliseum.

FUNARIN

The UAAP Board issued the clarification yesterday in the wake of reports that there was a last-minute change in the criteria for the selection of the coach of the year.

"The UAAP technical committee had decided only on that the Coach of the Year award will be given to the coach of the champion team. He had a meeting with the Final Four coaches last Sept. 13 and told them about it," said Chief Executive Dennis Aue.

The Coach of the Year who originally picked by the members of the media, who were also duly not informed of the change in the criteria and voted on to pick Bienvenido "Benjo" Flores of the Red's Division Pumares, who beat Jerdon Feuer by a single ballot, for the award.

Thalia miscreant protest when the UAAP honored the league's top individual performers Sunday to receive the award.

"Everyone was congratulating me already. At the awards, I went into the La Salle dugout and I say [coach] Franz congratulated me, [so] I said he made pair [that I had] there was an award after all," said Pumares, who took all the crafts awards.

Aue said the Board would assure that awards votes were cast to decide the top coach.

PBA awaits DOJ ruling on Fil-Ams

By Jane Navarro

THE MILETUS Basketball Association said yesterday it would wait for the findings of the Department of Justice before making a move on the controversial Filipino-foreign players issue.

PBA Chief Rudy Salvacion said the Board of Governors would submit itself to the jurisdiction of the DOJ and abide by the decision it would hand down on the nine Fil-Ams who allegedly held spurious citizenship documents.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has already formed a task force to investigate the cases of the Fil-Ams led by Asi Taulava of Talk N' Text and Red Bull's Mick Pennisi and Dwayne Hoyt, who the Senate recommended to be deported as pure aps.

"The board has decided to respect the process, abide by the rule of law and await any decision to be made by the DOJ," said commissioner Noli Teka after the six-hour board meeting.

Teka, who presented a lengthy report on the Fil-Ams before the board, added the league would be willing to work with the DOJ to immediately solve the issue.

Other Fil-Ams recommended for summary deportation were Coca-Cola's Rod Ronzo and Brad Hodges, Alex Crisano and Andy Seigle of Sarangani Giselers, San Miguel Beer's Gordon Pelle and Jon Jackson of Red Bull.

If found guilty by the DOJ, these players will automatically be disallowed to play for their respective ballclubs but can appeal the verdict before the RP summary deportation proceedings.

Meanwhile, Red Bull reportedly walked out of its game against a Korean squad in the fourth Asia Invitational Basketball tournament because of heavy officiating.

"We really wanted to make Bondad a principal member of the team. But parents not being able to make it have spelled the difference," he said.

Meanwhile, a five-man RP team composed of Ivanna Bondad, Pelden Garcia, Celen Castañeda, Bing Bunyi and Iggy Gervacio will see action starting today in the Asia Pacific Amateur Championship at the Raffle Country Club in Singapore.

The tournament will be played over 54 holes with teams from the United States and New Zealand as favorites.

Laylo, Senador down foes, keep 1-2 nat'l chess spots

[illegible]

TAGAYTAY CITY...The contenders kept their distance from the pacesetters after the 7-6th round yesterday of the National Chess Championship at the Tagaytay International Convention Center here.

Dreams Laylo made short work of fellow National Master Wilsheros Maga to both share in the title and a slot in the Philippine team in the World Chess Olympiad slated Oct. 14-31 in Calvia, Spain.

Maga's blunder in the opening of their 3-regular game used Laylo's demolition job that lasted only 29 moves.

"Binigay niya sakin ng pagkakataong umatake agad kaya nasamantala ko na. Eto gusto kong laro (He gave me the opportunity to attack early,)" said Laylo, a former national juniors champ after pushing his tally to 6.5 points.

The top three finishers in seven play and the 7th four winning the weekend will join seeded players Grandmasters Eugene Torre, Joey Antonio and Mark Paragua in the IST team.

The rest of 16th round matches ended decisively.

NM Emmanuel Senador whipped International Master Rodo Nadera after 39 moves of an English Opening to remain in second place, half point off the pace.

Also churning out impressive performances were Bb Jayson Gonzales and GM-to-Garma, who are locked in a tight battle for the third spot.

Gonzales, who stopped the winning run of erstwhile second running IM Oliver Barbosa in the 13th round, awaited IM Ronald Dableo after his 7th victory of an Irregular Opening, while Garma downed NM Rodolfo Dela Justina after 28 moves of a Sicilian.

Gonzales and Garma rule 9.5 points each, making Test 360, and possibilities round counting perhaps the most crucial in the 12-day event.

Barbosa regained his winning touch against 26-year-old Pakalye Sevin their Sicilian. Closed game to stay in contention with three rounds to go. Barbosa now has 8 points.

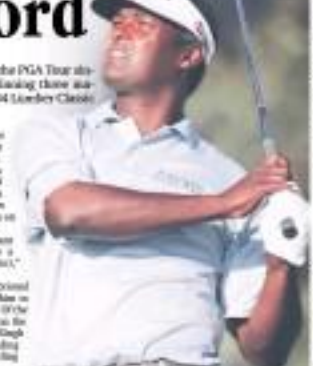
Other matches saw FIDE Master Norma Dongaban beat NM Leonardo Carbis in 39 moves of a Modern Defense, IM Philimin Sison defeat NM Roland Joseph Poon in 25 moves of a Gruenfeld, and FM Rolando Salazar take over NM Rolando Nolte after 35 moves of a Sicilian.

Meanwhile, WFM Shoreh Joy Gonzales fortified his hold of the top spot in women's play after downing FWM Cornelia Moreno in 29 moves of a Sicilian Closed.

The reigning National Open champion has 7.5 points after eight rounds to lead closest pursuer Daisy Rivera by 1.5 points.

Rivera scored a 31-move win over WIM Christine Caralipio in their Center Counter game. Marlon Bernardino, Cenit Bedno

Singh breaches Tiger's season money record



FARMINGTON, Pennsylvania—Vijay Singh broke the PGA Tour single-year money record Tiger Woods set while winning three majors in 2000, holding off Swenson Cink to win the 84 Lumber Classic by one shot Sunday for his third consecutive victory.

Singh's eighth championship this year pushed his money total to $8,695,546 in 26 events, surpassing Woods' $8,188,321 while he was winning nine times in 20 events in 2000. With Singh expecting to play four more times, he could become the first to win $10 million in one year.

"I'm going to try," Singh said.

Singh led from start to finish for his fifth victory in six tournaments, the best such streak since Woods won six in a row to end 1999 and start 2000. Singh has won seven times in his last 16 events.

In only three weeks, Singh has ended Woods' four-year run as the world's No. 1 ranked golfer and taken away one of Woods' foes in the PGA record book. Whether that's why Woods pulled out of the Ryder Cup, for other unexpectedly committing last week—he didn't want to see Singh knock him out of yet another hole.

"It's ridiculous the way he's playing right now," said Dave Eichhorn, who tied for third with Stuart and Zach Johnson after starting the round two back.

Singh had a three-under 67 Sunday, his third round in that 67-or-less range in four days, to finish at 19-under 273. Cink, five off the lead when the day started, had five straight birdies from No. 7 through No. 11 to make a move, but a bogey on the par-4 14th dropped him three back. Singh then birdied double-bogeys on the par-4 15th.

"I went to win, I went to play well and it's a good habit for get into," Singh said.

Again, Singh's exceptional fairway play allowed him to unveil on a long course. He's the eight longest courses on the PGA Tour this year. Singh won on four—including the PGA at Whistling Straits.

The accompanying Monte Rio course where the 84 Lumber is played was lengthened by about 400 yards to 7,471 yards after 11. Lowry won, but "post" at 22-under

SEE Singh's career continues to stay sizzled, **

29ers oust Cardinals from title race

LIFA CITY—Batangas finally beat Baguio, 90-86, Sunday in the phone visiting the Cardinals from the NBC [National Basketball Conference] North division title race in the Colonial and Governor's Cup finals.

Baron sharp-shooter out to finish, Jonny Abrera, off without hitch the 29ers' victory as he sighted-in for 3 points, two rebounds, five assists, two steals and one block.

With the win, the 29ers of Mulow Mayor Tito Reyes, Rep. Dane Gomez and businessman Ronnie Bacaron came to close at forward Tagorg in the quarterfinals.

Five-nerd Dennis Rodriguez stood tall for Batangas, chipping in 14 points.

"Unde talaga naming inatake dahil delaying time kanning tinalo ng Baguio," said 29ers coach Ring Gonzales.

Batangas led 79-68 going into the final period and padded this to 87-68 at the last 7:45 years. But the Cardinals strong 11 points in the home stretch to threaten at 90-87.

Batangas and Tagorg will clash on Oct. 6, 16, leaving the NBC All-Star Invitation in August 1 to on Oct. 1 and 2.

The scores:

BATANGAS 90—Abrera 14, Rodriguez 14, De Castro 8, Jose Jerome 8, Gaspar 7, Dia Cruz 7, Jimenez 6, Ramos 6, Jose 4, Velasco 3, Medina 2.

BAGUIO 86—Ramos 17, Adams 12, Medina 12, Sia 10, Almeida 9, Ventura 8, Fernando 7, Sarmiento 7, Sagum 3, Dimaala 2, Sangcaan 0. Ramirez.

Quarters: 21-12, 42-31, 71-52, 90-86.

Philsoc briefs GMA on SEAG tomorrow

By Mars Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee (Philsoc) will make a preliminary presentation tomorrow to President Macapagal-Arroyo regarding the country's preparation for the biennial event next year.

The presentation will be convened through Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and will include the "overall picture" of what's going to transpire between Nov. 27 to Dec. 3, the actual schedule of the 2005 Sea Games.

Philsoc expects to give the government an idea of the total cost of hosting the SEAG whose budget is now pegged at P600 million.

The Department of Budget and Management has earlier announced that "its government can only contribute P50 million for the biennial event, leaving the bulk share of the expenses to private sponsors.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain said the presentation will also include the trainings of some dozen 500 athletes and the extent of repairs on the government-owned facilities.

The Philippines will host the SEAG federation meeting on Oct. 11, 12 to finalize the lineup of sports, disciplines to be staged in the Games as well as the number of golds to be awarded.

So far, 34 sports have been approved with weightlifting and basketball being requested to make the roster. Philsoc intends to limit the total number of golds to less than 400.

The country is hosting the SEAG called for since 1981 and 1991.

SPORTSWATCH

Southville beats DLS-E booters

SOUTHVILLE International School and Colleges (SISC) went to opener in the Metro Manila Girls Football Association (MMGFA) tournament, 1-0, over De La Salle Greenhills (DLS-G) Saturday afternoon at the Rizal Memorial Track Oval. Southville striker Alex Gaudiza picked up a high ball and squeezed by her opponent's defenders and goalie to hit the back of the net with her only scoring bid in the 1-hour, 40-minute match. Against the run of play, Jessica Reyes, Anna Santamaria and Kyra Chanco of Southville combined to get the ball to Gaudiza inside the box. Southville keeper Kimberly Bautista held her lead and kept the relentless attacks from De La Salle at bay.

Domingo rules criterium race

DOMINGO Domingo captured yesterday's Women Criterium race 1 hour plus 5 laps beating Cecilia Chiu of the Quezon Memorial Circle. Domingo clocked 1 hour 11 minutes 20 seconds while second placer Nida Esaya finished 1 11:36. Teodylyn Nanan Dominguez finished in at 1:11:46. "We have to adapt the lanes and U-turns according to traffic as a criterium race, we have to set example on the road," said Chiu. The race started at the Quezon Memorial Circle and passed Commonwealth Avenue, Elliptical Road, Quezon Avenue, Roosevelt Avenue, Mindanao Avenue, Visayas Avenue, Congressional Avenue, Mindanao Avenue, Quezon Avenue, Elliptical Road and back to the Quezon Memorial Circle. Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) and Lt. Modelling Warrior Association Pinoy Cruz said bigger prizes will be raised in the final race on Dec. 5.

Free boxing at Festival Mall

TOP national boxing and running hopes of the country will display their wares as it go on today at the 2nd Boxercise Activity Center of Festival Mall in Alabang. The event is presented for free by Southwestern Sportsman Academy (SSA) to commemorate the country's participation from Athens to Beijing. Among the boxers who will perform are Olympians Rey Saludar and Mansueto "Onyok" Velasco, Asian Games bronze medalist Mark Jeff Geraldo, Filipino Flyers Inc.'s Mercedes Gladstone, the event was organized by Art Trinidad, Speed Enforcement Officer Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) and Lt. Modelling Warrior Association Pinoy Cruz said bigger prizes will be raised in the final race on Dec. 5.

Candenco, Bordado world swim bound

SISTERS Isabel Bordado from Quezon and her cousin Mariel Candenco and Marian Bordado were tapped to represent the country in the 11th Fina World Swimming Championships on Oct. 2-16 in Indianapolis, USA. According to Philippine Amateur Swimming Association (PASA) president Cynthia Rivera, they have asked Fina to send two of its best swimmers to attend the event. Fina will provide $1,000 to each swimmer.

Super 3-cock sluttan at PCC

BOTH GROUP fights start at 8 a.m. today as the "Super 3-Cock Sluttan hosted Bill Challenge" embolds at the air-conditioned Pinoy City Cockpit with Sugar pawn @ 40 Points, Sugapawan @ Ben Form and Sugapawan Consolation @ 500 as sponsors. More than 100 fights are scheduled, said promoter Kaga Pablo and Atty. Rodolfo. For an entry fee of P2,000 this guaranteed prize is P500,000. Another interesting tournament will be the biggest 3-cock derby in Pagsanjan with a P1,000 Bluewinds. The elimination of big-time cockers happens on Friday until Feast Lord's Living derby. Elimination of weights is on Thursday, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 800-1888, 800-7788 and 8810-8240.

GCAP holds 5-stag today

THE "GOOD LAMEN Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 5-Stag Derby" will be held today at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum. The derby starting at 1 p.m. is co-sponsored by Sugarcane Complement 5000 and Pagcor Cockers Inc. Cup. There will be the Pinoy Cup Derby' opening scheduled on Oct. 9 derby since the first GCAP Anglerfarm of the Year. The entrance will include P500,000 while the founder and golfer with get P10,000 and P250,000. Ang-an Derby, Sugarcane Complement 5000 SPC of Patrick Antonino and Lakanan Sa Pinoy Inc. for all the cocks from

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2004 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B1

BUSINESS

ics rental service

Ad valorem tax on 'sin' products bucked

By Michelle V. Barna

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance is not in favor of the popular opinion in the Lower House to revert to the ad valorem system of taxing cigarettes and alcohol, saying doing so would only bring back old problems encountered by the government prior to 1997.

A finance official said the DOF would stand firm on its own proposal not to tax ad valorem products when deliberations on the different versions of the bill on taxing cigarettes and alcohol resume next month.

"There are a lot of versions now in Congress, but the DOF will be pushing for its own version of the bill and will insist on our position not to go back to the ad valorem system," the finance official said. While there are several versions of the bill filed in Congress, most of them seek the return of the ad valorem system.

The government was collecting excise tax on cigarettes and alcohol using the ad valorem system until 1997, or when the new National Internal Revenue Code was implemented. The ad valorem was replaced by the specific taxation system.

Under the old ad valorem system, products were taxed based on their price and rating tax rates in percentage form. Under the current specific system, on the other hand, products are being taxed based on the volume of cigarettes or alcohol released from a manufacturing plant, and using tax rates expressed in peso value.

According to the finance official, the reason why the government had to impose the specific system was because of the sizeable printing being enjoyed by cigarette firms via trade-paying higher taxes. Since the old ad valorem system used wholesale prices to determine one's excise tax liabilities, some cigarette companies are their wholesale prices at low levels, and then set the prices much higher when the products are sold by their marketing units.

"This is why we do not want to go back to the ad valorem system because it is prone to manipulation as proven by the practice of transfer pricing. Using volume as a basis of taxation is better than price," the finance official said.

Some legislators proposed that instead of wholesale prices, retail prices should be used as a basis of taxation to solve the problem on transfer pricing and therefore make the ad valorem system work effectively. The DOF, however, said that using retail price as a basis of taxation would be complicated to implement.

The DOF said that if retail price would be used as a basis, there would be confusion as from where the government would collect the excise tax. Under the current specific system said the official, the government collects the tax directly from the manufacturing plant.

AD VALOREM, B6

T-bill rates drop; 91-day yield at 7.639%

By Michelle V. Barna

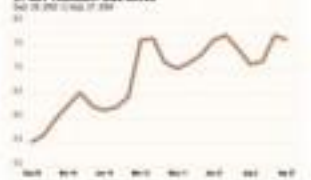
AMIDST with cash, banks remained for short-term government securities yesterday forcing the benchmark 91-day treasury bill rate to decline to 7.639 percent during yesterday's auction.

This was 7.9 basis points lower than the 7.718 percent recorded during the auction two weeks ago.

The rate for the 364-day debt paper also declined, hitting 9.772 percent yesterday from 9.976 the previous auction. The rate for the 182-day bills stood at 8.536 percent. The Bureau of Treasury's auction committee rejected bids for the 182-day debt paper two weeks ago because of the very high bids.

The lower rates for the short-term government securities were brought by the huge appetite of the market for the debt paper, which were all oversubscribed. Bids for the 91-day bills reached P4.79 billion compared with the government's offering of only P4.1 billion. Tenders for the 182-day bills stood at P4.02 billion compared with the government's P3.1-billion offering. The 364-day paper was the most subscribed, with tenders reaching P10.31 billion, or more than three times higher than the government's scheduled borrowing of only P3 billion.

Assistant Treasurer Mina Pigueiras, who heads the auction committee, said banks only exhibited normal market reactions when they offered lower bid prices. She said banks were unreasonably low



coming in as insurance in US interest rates and inflation, which have already been accounted for in early or mid-bids, in trying to push THE rates higher.

"We have already set caps (on the maximum acceptable rates

T-BILL, B3

Mining sector lures investors

By Rosiel W. Ebarvia

A CANADIAN mineral exploration firm last week announced it confirmed gold and copper prospects in the country while the government said at least P4 billion worth of large-scale mining projects were expected to start within the next five years.

Alberta-based Bhirdow Resources Ltd. said in a statement that geological tests confirmed a "porphyry" copper-gold system on its Archangel project in Batangas.

The company explained that the term referred to "a large-tonnage, relatively low-grade copper-gold deposit containing very large copper and gold resources, which could be mined in bulk."

Bhirdow Resources, which recently listed its shares on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange, announced a week earlier about a similar finding at its Tayuan Iloilo Project.

The firm's website described it as having been active in the country for the past seven years and "is focused on six promising projects in politically stable jurisdictions in the Philippines."

In a related matter, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said in an economic outlook re-

Absolute power collapse

IN BUSINESS circles, they have no qualms about crowing. They need to say that we were the cock sauce of Asia. Here they are saying that we are already in the IFD.

Sure, Vietnam is doing better than us. That country now has up some 24 million in tons of coconut every year. To catch up with the rest of Asean, we are up only 12 million tons.

In a few years, surely, we can expect Malaysia to have the farthest infrastructure than ours. That's not bad for a country that has yet to switch over to democracy.

But still, whenever I hear a know-it-all executive backwash this country, I will have to file him, and I don't even should bark on the upbeating sides, if in his heart he truly believes, as a natural born Filipino, that this country is sick, or that it is somehow irredeemable, how come we are still the world's tomboy is ... well, cell phone "texting."

Take that! I do not take insults thrown upon my own country rightly! I cannot help it.

* * *

JUST yesterday morning, the core administration of Gloriastra again showed the world that it is chief curious in preventing multiple debilitating power crises in three years.

The Asian Development Bank says that we must build new power plants for 6,000 megawatts to forestall blackouts.

And what are we doing about it? Well, as I see this, we are only doing our damndest best to do nothing at all.

But the news report said that the country's biggest of big businessmen, namely, San Miguel Corp. and First Pacific, are bidding for the new mini-coastal line called Transco.

That's the company which was formed, as part of the energy sector reform program, to sell the transmission lines under the privatization program of Napocor.

Based on the reports, obviously leaked by the government, you may get the impression that, finally, things are moving in the power sector.

Well, they are moving in media. That's the thing with the new administration. If it deals with the problem in media, it is counted as "solved." Shirt was pleated.

* * *

SO HERE things happen in our country in media, thanks to Malacañang media releases, whether official or otherwise. Or becoming power crisis remains a big worry in business.

Somebody must do something about the problem. It is keeping business away from new job planning we do more business. You know the "other job" factor?

That's why the news must get to media, somehow that the energy sector reform program is undestroy. Look, Mirandilla, they are now fighting over Transco! Something like that!

Being a publicly listed firm, however, SMC was very forced by the rapids to make a full disclosure the stock exchange, something about what the Transco deal was dividend.

Actually, SMC only got no invitation from two gigantic foreign groups, namely, Deutsche Bank and Singapore Power, to join a consortium to bid for Transco.

And who are, curious? Based on a recent announcement from SMC chair and CEO Eduardo "Ted-ing" Cojuangco Jr., the conglomerate is on the lookout for investments.

Equaling said that, in the next three years, SMC itself is eying coal-fired 15 billion for it such investments. In short in Bandung and company, money is no object.

* * *

HERE are the exact words of the SMC boss: "This consistent focus to grow our market reflects SMC's continuing confidence in the Philippine economy."

In short you have it: it's about CONFIDENCE. SMC is investing tons of money in this country because it believes that we will have a future.

To Eduding, our economic fundamentals remain sound. We have the low in private consumption, thanks mainly to the OFWs, plus the jump in exports.

IB reserve, if you consider that the BSC suspension is supposedly dusted in its 114 years of existence, you too may find hope in this country of ours' "tomary."

That text, from what I hear, SMC is ready to inaugurate two huge food processing plants, owned by its subsidiary Purefoods, one in Cavite and the other in Batangas.

And then it is opening a new flour mill, which has a capacity. Flour Milling facility, plus a couple of feed mills in Batam and Miranda Holland, a big investor here in Batangas, and Ing Barings in Turkey and Indonesia.

To top it all, SMC is putting up an industrial park in Laguna, where it will locate some new manufacturing plants.

And don't even think of trying to stop it. SMC is pouring more money in to beverage making facilities. For what, you may ask? For export!

* * *

BUT precisely because of its expansion in manufacturing, SMC itself seems to be worried about the power crisis. Last summer, from what I hear, it actually bought the used power generators from the San Roque dam project.

SMC can put electricity, the energy sector. Why not? Money is the least of its problems, and it can help prevent a repeat of the 12-hour brownouts.

But the thing is, under its bylaws, SMC is committed to stay in the food business. To go into the power sector, it will need the approval of its stockholders to amend its charter.

To do that, management needs to get the approval of the board. Management also needs to study—and study it hard enough—whether or not an investment in Transco will yield the same return as, say, an investment in food.

It's not so if, not because of the similar reports, SMC is already set on bidding for Transco. For from it, Robert? SMC is out in the toilet collecting empty coconut.

* * *

BETTER set aside the power crisis is real. In a conference on energy sponsored by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, one speaker noted that the power shortage should be resolved in 2017 or early 2006.

If we were to prevent it. So said, we should make the order for a power plant in the next 60 days. And that was in May 2004! How does 120 days ago!

Now we have all of three years to do it. We should be kidding now if we don't, we will only repeat the mistake of the Ramos Administration.

At that time, with blackouts running up to 12 hours a day, Erap's Bible had to go for the so-called "fast track." Result: the infamous IPPs.

They are the private generation plants which became famous for onerous contracts, almost synonymous to first degree murder of the Filipino consumers.

What we need now are "new cheap plants." They can sell electricity to distributors and industrial users at competitive rates. After all, creating competition is what we need out of the energy crisis, and that is not media what we all don't.

9th national convention on statistics starts on Oct. 4

THE 9TH PSS National Convention on Statistics will be held on Oct. 4 and 5 in the Eden Hotel in Nueva Ecija.

The convention, held every three years, will bring together some 600 statisticians, computer engineers, applied scientists and researchers from all over the country to share, learn and improve knowledge and skills in the field of statistics.

Speakers at the two-day event, which has the theme "Riding Beyond Global Challenges Through Quality Philippine Statistics," will cover topics on statistical applications in productivity, education, health, environment, science, technology, local government and other fields.

For more information, please contact the Convention Secretariat at the National Statistical Coordination Board, 2nd Midland Building, 901 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City, telephone numbers 897-2276, 8912686; or email nss@nscb.gov.ph.

T-bill ...

(Continued from B1)

for government securities). We are more than happy to implementing these rate... that's why banks offered lower rates now," Figueroa said in a briefing of treasury auction.

Figueroa, whose resignation takes effect on Oct. 15, said the auction committee had set the cap for the 91-day bills at 7.75% percent and for the 364-day paper at 10 percent. She said the committee has not set a cap for the 1,822-day bills as they did not expect substantially high bids for three securities.

Figueroa said the bond on the levels favored acceptable by the auction committee, they accepted only P3.91 billion worth of bids for the 91-day paper and did not raise the entire amount of the scheduled borrowing of P4.5 billion. For the 182- and 364-day bills, the committee accepted P9.5 billion and P5 billion worth of bids, respectively, raising the full amount of the borrowing program.

Figueroa defended the Treasury's move of setting caps, explaining that this was practical to prevent unreasonable increases in interest rates. "Though rates should basically be market-determined, the Treasury also has to step in to help get rates that are reasonable for the government," she said.

ATENEO GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

MIGRATES TO A NEW VANTAGE POINT IN CEBU

The Ateneo Graduate School of Business in Cebu has alighted on a new perch at the Cebu Holdings Building Ayala Business Park.

Previously located at the North Reclamation area, it is now at the center of the business district—walking distance from the Ayala Center Cebu and just across the Marriott Hotel.

ATENEO GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
GF Cebu Holdings Building
Ayala Business Park, Cebu City
Tel 032-2322065 and 032-2319478

DISCLOSURES

ELECTED as the board of directors of **Anglo Philippine Holdings Corp.** were Alfredo Ramos, Presentacion Ramos, Augusto Zuzuaregui, Patrick Cowell, Mariano Lozano III, Christopher Gotanco, Francisco Benzon, Rolando Gan Jose, Nieto Bascuñana, Raul Dee Gotiño and Leonardo Ar... grados Jr.

* * *

ELECTED regular members of the board of directors of **Philippine Realty Corp.** were Rodolfo Ang, Jose Rene Almendras, Alicia Teng, Bienvenido Rubio Jr., Lizandro Abadilla, Felimon Dela Cruz, Arthur Lopez, Ramon Segundo, Angel Limcaoco and Jose Francisco and Joaquin Chiong.

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ELECTED as members of the board of directors of **Nickel Asia Corp.** were Manuel B. Zamora Jr., Antonio Agustin, Arthur Ty, Martin Antonio G. Zamora, Rex Ma. Mikel F. Arcenas, Takanori Fujiwara, Hiroshi Ochi, Masahiro Yamada, Tetsuji Kawamura, Gil A. Buenaventura and Jorge Ramon T. Gonzalez.

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TRANSCO CONCESSION BID

It's know-how, not cash, that counts, says PSALM exec

By Abigail L. Hu and Elizabeth L. Sanchez

ANY TEAM wanting to bag the 25-year concession agreement for the country's transmission power grid has to have the appropriate level of technical expertise and not only financial muscle, according to the top official of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM).

Raphael Lotilla, PSALM president, said Republic Act 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (Epira) required Brisa wing for the National Transmission Corp. (Transco)'s concession to have enough technical and financial capabilities to manage and operate the national grid.

"They have to meet the requirements of the law," he said. "They have to have some technical qualifications."

Food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. and conglomerate Metro Pacific Corp. are currently studying the possibility of bidding for the Transco concession.

While both firms have the financial muscle to acquire the assets, both do not have any experience in the power sector.

While not specifically referring to SMC and Metro Pacific, Lotilla said that unless a prospective Transco concession has partners with enough technical capabilities in running a national transmission grid, they would not be considered suitable candidates for the contract.

Analysts balked at the possibility of SMC participating in the auction for the Transco concession contract as power was never part of the company's core competencies.

"It may have a negative effect since that is outside of their core business," a senior analyst from a local think tank said. "Btw, they have to not see the regulatory environment (governing these assets), specially on the judiciary level."

While analysts reacted negatively to the SMC bid for the Transco concession, they said it would make more sense for Metro Pacific to participate in the auction as it is now involved in infrastructure projects.

Metro Pacific, through Metro Strategic Infrastructure Holdings Inc., holds a 15-percent stake in Cavitex Metro Manila Tollway Corp., owner and operator of Skyway.

Five firms are currently in the running to bag the Transco concession agreement.

RP firm invests ₱27.6M for seaweed export

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PCI NISSHIMESE Inc., a 100-percent Filipino firm, is investing ₱27.6 million for the production and export of refined and semi-processed carrageenan.

According to the Department of Trade and Industry, PCINI's facility in Carmona, Cavite, would initially get the bulk of its seaweed requirements from the coastal areas of Mindanao.

However, PCINI also has plans to source half of its raw materials from fourteen Tagalog provinces, the Mindoro and Palawan.

PCINI would help develop seaweed farming activities in close provinces by facilitating seminars on the proper method of seaweed cultivation, harvesting, drying and handling process, with help from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, DTI officials said.

PCINI, whose venture would start commercial operation in March 2005, has assured the government it has an immediate market for its products.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez said the government was encouraging investors to focus their projects in the marginal regions to create jobs and help in developing such areas.

"Among the support that is provided to these projects are tax incentives such as income tax holiday, tax credit on raw materials and duty-free importation of capital equipment," Hernandez said.

Hernandez, who is managing head of the Board of Investments, said from investors in such projects could also avail of assistance from government financial institutions.

The Philippines is one of the world's top producers of raw seeds—specifically the red variety—next only to China and Japan.

Seaweeds are exported in their raw form, fresh or dried, or processed forms, like semi-refined chips or carrageenan, and refined carrageenan.

Major markets of seaweeds and its natural products are countries like France, Korea, China, USA and Hong Kong.

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BUSINESS

Banks seeking flexibility to hedge T-bills, T-bonds

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANKERS have asked the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to give them the flexibility to hedge their portfolios of Treasury bills and bonds in order to help deepen the capital markets.

In an interview with Inquirer, Association Cambiste International Philippine chapter president Marcelo Ayon said Philippine banks would be able to better manage their exposures if they were allowed to engage in interest rate derivatives.

"If interest rates are going down and your portfolio is locked in, it is favorable for you because your holdings of debt papers carry higher rates," Ayon said.

"But if interest rates are going up, you lose because your holdings are locked in at fixed rate, so you would want to take a short position," he said. "There are like interest rate futures."

He noted the BSP's existing rules provided that only banks with expanded derivatives licenses could engage even in simple hedging mechanisms such as interest rate swaps.

Derivatives refer to sophisticated hedging instruments whose values are based on the value of an underlying good or instrument.

Interest rate swap is a derivative instrument which involves an exchange of two debt obligations that have different payment streams. The transaction usually exchanges two parallel loans into fixed-to-other flowing.

Ayon said there were only about 12 banks in the country which had existing expanded derivatives licenses, and even those were allowed only to handle interest rate swaps.

"The BSP in its circular should allow all banks to hedge provided the banks get their documents for every transaction," Ayon said.

PPA posts P1.2B in net income

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PHILIPPINE Ports Authority has reported a net income of P1.22 billion in the first half, up 33 percent from P918 million a year ago, as revenues rose 3 percent while expenses dropped by almost 1% percent.

PPA general manager Oscar Sevilla yesterday said the maritime agency would definitely surpass its full-year profit target of P1.36 billion given the strong performance in the first semester.

The six-month income even exceeded the agency's original target of P1.004 billion. Revenue from January to June reached P2.7 billion, up from P2.64 billion a year ago. Expenses slumped by P320 million from P1.73 billion last year.

The PPA is tasked to operate government-owned ports, help regulate the maritime industry and put up more ports to improve the flow of goods and services. The maritime agency is one of the government's big revenue earners in terms of fees collected from foreign vessel that dock in local ports.

A big part of the PPA's earnings comes from the Manila and the North Harbor.

"We get a 'lion's share' in the income from the operations of private contractors. We also get a fee from ship calls," said Sevilla.

Last year, more than 100,000 ships docked in the country's ports.

The agency is projecting a 14-percent growth in its net income this year to P1.38 billion, from P847.3 million in 2003. Revenue from port operations this year is expected to go up to P5.3 billion from P5.4 billion last year and expenses are seen to drop by 10 percent to P3.12 billion, from P3.22 billion in 2003.

All PPA ports have fully complied with the new global standards on safety and security outlined by the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, according to Sevilla.

FDC selling holdings in Hocheng firms

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

GOTIANUN-LED holding firm Filinvest Development Corp. (FDC) is selling its stake in the local affiliates of Taiwanese battery maker company Hocheng to Richtone International Ltd., another shareholder of the Hocheng group.

The move will allow FDC to concentrate on its core businesses such as property development and banking, well-informed sources said.

Sources could not immediately disclose FDC's selling price for the Hocheng stake.

Sources said FDC had agreed to sell its 25-percent stake in manufacturing firm Hocheng Philippines Corp. and its 60-percent in Hocheng Philippines Property, the owner of a Clarkfield property where the Hocheng factory is located.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, FDC said its board had confirmed accepting the offer of Richtone to buy the stake. The FDC board has authorized its president Josephine Yap and board director Herminio Gotianun to represent the company in the deal and to execute and deliver the documents to complete the acquisition.

Hocheng Philippines exports to Asia, Middle East and the United States.

FDC has been into real estate development since 1967 through Filinvest Land Inc.

FDC has interests in residential property development, commercial property development, banking and financial services through East West Bank and information technology.

Napocor's huge debt, colossal losses

By Edgardo M. Dorotan
(First of a series)

THE NATIONAL Power Corp. is once again in the eye of the storm for the umpteenth time in its checkered history. This time the condemnation is coming from hard-core Napocor fan its huge base of industrial clients and rising tariff.

Accusations are coming in torrid, as if there is little demand for them: Napocor is run by incompetent, corrupt people who brought financial ruin to the company and who should therefore have their salaries cut, the charged from service, or (hopefully with tongue in cheek) electrocuted. Napocor itself should be placed under direct supervision, closed down, or ripped (hopefully with tongue in cheek) bombed out of existence.

Napocor executives and other officials are shrinking between the two houses of Congress to contest the issues in order to head off legislative a confusing array of contentious, all ostensibly in aid of legislation.

No one can begrudge Congress for exercising its right to scrutinize to set down pressing issues of national concern, curb abuses of the executive department, or to craft better laws, but such legislative processes are susceptible to subversion through a dogmatistic exchange of views and perspectives in good faith among reasonable men and women. But in what hearings are really about.

The problem with these hearings is that they are less an effort to uncover the truth or to understand the fundamental issues behind a given problem, than a search for scapegoats on whom to blame an issue hapless public officials, past or present, for a perceived wrong. We are well-absorbed by tributes fulminating with self-righteous, if somewhat self-conscious, indignation and relished by big hapless witnesses to public ridicule with not even the slightest pretense at elementary assurance on existing (hopefully while TV cameras are rolling.

Public ridicule

The atmosphere at these hearings is at once accusatory and one seeking the rubbers from the exhibition could not help feeling that the hearings party is at work.

The objective seems to be to intimidate, even to demean the witnesses from the start to soften them up for the inquisition to follow. One such looming scene with the semi-naked all powerful most officials, being asked to state one by one, under oath and the glare of TV cameras, their total salaries and allowances, as if to pressure them to admit to unreasonable salaries. All they got was the revelation that the president and chief executive officer of the biggest Philippine corporations in sales and assets is taking home no more than a mid-level manager in a mid-sized private company.

And yet when the hearings started in earnest, the witnesses never got the chance to discuss fully the issues at the root of the problem, which took the get to the bottom of Napocor's losses and level of debt. Committee members took turns pummeling the witnesses with questions as if hurling loads of cannon balls to find out who could bring more ammunition to the witnesses. Its the hearing ended without resolving anything, other than to hold the witnesses to ridicule and public.

Some legislators have solemnly intoned that Napocor should be closed down because of its debt and its losses. But the debt and losses are just symptoms of the underlying problem. Closing Napocor or capping its debt will remove the symptoms, perhaps, but the underlying problems remain. The government still has to cover the power plants until they are written off, and the debt will be guaranteed by the national government, still has to be paid. In a debt cap or Napocor's closure will not bring any lasting solution.

The bold key is that Napocor has been used as a vehicle to provide hidden subsidies for the consumers. Napocor was tasked to build power plants entirely on borrowed money, then turned to sell electricity below cost. One of the results is a financial bogs down almost entirely in foreign currency.

THE 1,200-MW Ilijan power plant of Napocor was built under the BOT scheme.

COMMENTARY

Napocor has been unable to obtain a tariff structure that will fully cover its costs. That is bad enough, because it would need to borrow to pay for its maturing loans and interest. But if the price also depreciates against foreign currencies, as it continues to, the effect is catastrophic.

Flawed policies, priorities

It is now time to pony up for these subsidies. It is not Roger Mitra's fault as Napocor president for presiding over the wrecked state of affairs. If Mitchell the beleaguered were running Napocor, they also would be asking for his head for his wrongs as no time at all. But as experts point out, to overcome these problems is a little like sending Roger out with another Light Brigade to walk one march against a battalion of mounted artillery, cavalry and infantry, and expecting him to emerge victorious and decorated outstanding UP ribbons, and with a distinguished career in the private sector behind him, he can be as good as anyone in running any corporation. But not with the impossible odds he, the Lord Cardigan of Balaclava, had faced.

This paper is intended to discuss the dimensions of Napocor's financial problems and to understand how it got to where it is now. In the process, it will attempt to address the positive reasons for Napocor's financial distress, and bring to light other forces and developments that have had a major impact on the Napocor story but which have never been acknowledged in all the debates so far.

Now, an understanding of the size and reasons for Napocor's 2003 losses is useful in providing context. The consolidated loss of Napocor and National Transmission Co.—Transco is still officially part of Napocor—is P117 billion. P112 billion for Napocor, P9 billion for Transco. (Transco actually had money due to its proper climate share in the interest and foreign exchange losses).

Interests, forex losses

Napocor's other expenses, coincidentally, also totalled P117 billion, consisting mostly of interest and foreign exchange losses. One would argue that if not for these other expenses, Napocor would have been in the black in 2003. Of these other expenses, P78 billion...or two-thirds of the losses ...is directly linked to a bookkeeping change. Until 2002 Intel lost on its loans and IPP obligations were booked on the basis of the outstanding life of the underlying loans or contracts, some of which stretch as far out as 2026. Indeed, this is exactly how the obligations will be discharged, but in a major swing of the pendulum in March [illegible] conservatism, the accounting profession decreed through Statement of Financial Accounting Standards 8A that companies should take the full interest losses immediately and in full. Thus, an interest-accounting guideline magnified Napocor's losses by three times, compared to what it would have reported under previous accounting for. Note that the P78 billion is a transition loss payable over a period of time, not an out-of-pocket cost payable this year or next. A lot of people have made a lot of noise and issued dire predictions on the assumption that the P78 billion is a recurring charge that calls for immediate cash payment.

Of all the lament over Napocor's perilous financial condition, none has attracted more blame than the Arroyo administration's decision in May 2002 to cap the Purchased Power Cost at P0.60 per kilowatt hour. Citing it as a concession to populist sentiment, critics claim that the cap is the single largest blame in Napocor's culpability among the utility almost P50 billion purely in lost revenue.

There are three things wrong with the analysis and the conclusions that flowed from that.

▲ The 50.6%/50% under-recovery was only for Luzon. The PPA per kWh in May 2002: P1.23 for Luzon, P0.70 for the Visayas and P0.54 for Mindanao. The increase for the Philippines was P1.20. With a cap of P0.60, the under-recovery was therefore P0.649, and not P0.80 as has been generally believed.

▲ In October 2002 the ERC unbundled generation rates, as required by law. The total generation rate Napocor could charge its customers remained the same, but the classification of charges was changed. Now there are three components: Fuel, Purchased Power Cost or PPC, and basic charge. The rest of the IPP recovers was only between PPC—the amount subject to the Presidential cap...and amortization of capacity fees, classified under basic charge. Because ERC is now lower, this necessarily the amount consumers would also decline. With the cap remaining at P0.40/kWh under recovery was reduced further from P0.09 in May 2002 to an average of P0.04 through July 2004. Of the P0.04, Napocor has recovered P0.11 by virtue of subsequent ERC rulings, leaving just P0.23 per kilowatt hour, equivalent to P18 billion, as the amount that has remained unrecovered from the May 2002 decision. That is a long way from the P60 billion that some critics are claiming.

▲ The third reason why the predictions about the impact of the PPA cap will not happen is that the absolute level of the PPA will decline to due course, as some of the more expensive oil-fired plants are retired from service. Right IPPs with a total capacity of 756 MW have expired, and six more with 577 MW of capacity will terminate by 2008. Savings from the re-negotiation of IPP contracts will also help reduce the overall amount of the PPA. These reductions, coupled with the increase in volume of sales over time, will bring the PPA down steeply from its peak in 2002. By 2006, the unadjusted PPA will be at P0.35 per kWh, below the P0.60 cap.

Not completely lost

What all these say is that the second and key over the President's decision to cap the PPA is all for nothing. Of Napocor's loss in 2003 of P117 billion, P6 billion, or less than 5 percent, was due to the PPA cap, and even that will eventually be collected. Critics will have to look up another issue.

There are two more points in relation to the President's decision to cap the PPA, for from being a knee-jerk reaction to the public's clamor for lower power rates, the underlying analysis of basis for capping the PPA came from the economic managers of the government, and was approved by the JCEC and approved by the President on Oct. 4, 2002.

The President's decision was therefore based not on studies that showed Napocor can support a "breakeven" PPA of P0.60 per kWh, assuming ERC would allow recovery of the financing cost. Gloria did not merely confirm or deny, since it was put into place before MPC could obtain explicit authority from ERC.

Now a word on the timing. At the time of the President's decision, there was a loud chorus from consumers, consumer-oriented groups and the media to reduce the PPA. Meralco's PPA were all speculated by Oasis, and the combined PPA from Meralco and Napocor were running at over P4.00 per kWh.

Congress took note of the chorus, and soon competing bills were filed trying to outdo one another in driving down the PPA. (Senate Bill No. 1974) filed by the energy committee would merely abort on percent of residential customers from the PPA, and the rest would enjoy a moratorium of three to four years before they pay accounts of PPA for Napocor. Meralco and Napocor would be exempt in PPC in its franchise area). Under Senate Bill 2140 filed by 14 senators (eight of whom are still in office), 75 percent of residential consumers would either enjoy total elimination or a 50 percent discount while all others would enjoy three years of PPA-free electricity. An amendment proposed by an opposition senator would either eliminate the PPA for all consumers or 99 percent of all residential customers, for the others, the frozen rate for three years. Hopefully all these bills would allow Napocor to recover the actual financing costs, but it still would have to raise as much as P40 billion in incremental fares because of the existence of the times, it was a foregone conclusion that Congress would pass one of these bills.

The President's move in May 2002 therefore pre-empted the snowballing move to legislate a lower PPA. That action served several purposes; it silenced the current noise, kept power rates low, kept the PPA at a reasonable and affordable level, and saved Napocor from having to borrow several hundred billion pesos more.

It is interesting that back then, legislators were flapping over one another trying to claim paternity to an idea that would be perceived as pro-poor. As the decision on the PPA cap has become an orphan for legislators, not one of them—including those who sponsored the various PPA bills—has stood up to defend or even agree with the President's decision. Some of these subsequently-filed bills would practically wipe out Napocor's net worth and give savings are among the most vocal in criticizing the President on this issue.

As a final note on this subject, the "levelized" PPA was estimated in 2003 at P0.60 per kWh over 20 years. An update prepared by PNAL in April 2004 shows the "levelized" PPA will now be P0.21 per kWh in 16 years. In the end, therefore, a lot of iron died and gallons of ink spilled over a non-issue.

Deal with Meralco

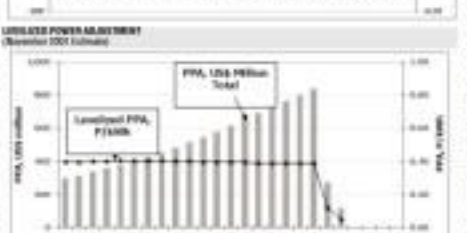
Another reason mistakenly cited for Napocor's loss is the failure of Meralco to abide by the terms of its 10-year supply agreement with Napocor. In the end, IPPs become operational, Meralco began to cut its purchase of power from Napocor below the contracted level. Napocor's contract is full Meralco for the full volume but Meralco refused to pay up, invoking various reasons as the basis for its action. Napocor and Meralco eventually agreed on a compromise, and appealed to settle the dispute, and the agreement is now pending for the approval of the ERC. Until the matter is final by resolved Napocor continues to accrue revenues from Meralco as if the 10-year contract is still operative, and so has not booked any loss arising from the Napocor-Meralco agreement. Thus, Meralco's refusal to honor the contract has not had an impact on Napocor's profitability so far. However, added to Napocor's financing burden are its receivables from Meralco keep piling up pending eventual settlement. (To be continued)

(The author is the former president of Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp.)

DEL FONSO

from the Napocor privatization plan, prepared by PNALM executive with SGV Bachrabhi, a respected international investment bank. PNALM submitted the privatization plan to the Joint Congressional Power Commission in November 2001, months before the PPA decision.

The main body of the privatization plan described the proposed modality, sequence, timing and valuation in selling the assets of Napocor and Transco. It devoted a section on IPP facilities. Napocor management, a function that PNALM assumed under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, or Epira. What the President ordered was precisely what PNALM suggested, a cheap for the timing. PNALM proposed to "freeze" the PPA—i.e., Batten it out as a constant amount over a period of time, rather than change it as and when incurred. Implementation of the PPA would follow a downward slope from P0.60 per kWh in 2003 to zero in 2013, instead of imposing a high PPA in the early years, Napocor would bill consumers a constant nominal amount over a period of time and thereby give consumers relief in the medium term. The savings proposed at the time showed that a uniform PPA of P0.40 per kwh over a 20-year period would suppose to pay the unadjusted PPA. The plan, however, was contingent on the



Smart, Sun Cellular ordered to settle row

By Clarissa S. Basino

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission has directed Smart Communications Inc. and Sun Cellular of Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc. to immediately resolve their interconnection dispute so as not to affect their services to subscribers.

Smart and Sun Cellular were locked in disagreement over interconnection fees, network tie-in and other issues.

The NTC said it was worried that Smart would disconnect from Digitel's wireless and landline operations and has ordered the country's biggest mobile firm not to disrupt its services with the Lopez-owned telecom firm.

Smart had 16.1 million subscribers as of end-June while Sun Cellular said it had about 700,000 customers.

Interconnection is crucial especially for small players like Sun Cellular because it would have a hard time attracting subscribers if it can't hook up with the bigger players.

Smart had a similar problem with Globe when the former was just starting to offer the GSM wireless service and the Ayala-controlled firm already had a critical mass of subscribers. Smart, a subsidiary of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., retaliated through its parent firm by refusing to hook up with Globe.

The issue blew up and then President Estrada had to intervene to resolve the interconnection dispute.

"The Commission enjoins the parties from taking any unilateral action that would result to the disconnection or disruption of interconnection between their respective networks that may affect service," the NTC said in its order dated Sept. 17 to Smart and Sun Cellular.

Sources said Smart was charging Digitel more than P80 million in interconnection fees, but Digitel had paid only P46 million based on reduced domestic access charges.

The interconnection fees cover the traffic from Digitel's fixed-line to Smart, Smart to Digitel fixed-line, Sun Cellular to Smart and Smart to Sun Cellular.

Ad valorem . . .

From page B1

"If we will be using the retail prices, how will the tax be collected, considering the many retailers and retailers we have," the finance official asked. The source said the bills currently filed in Congress seeking the return to ad valorem do not have a provision saying how and from whom the government will collect the excise taxes when the retail price is used as a basis.

Under the DOF's proposal, the specific system of taxation would be retained, but the tax rates would be increased by 20.1 percent to reflect the inflation rate from 1997 to 2003. The DOF's proposal states the following change in tax rates:

- from P5.12 to P5.46 per pack for cigarettes that cost below P5 per pack;
- from P5.60 to P7.28 per pack for those that cost between P5 and P6.50;
- from P6.96 to P11.66 per pack for cigarettes costing between P6.51 and P30;
- from P15.44 to P17.46 per pack for cigarettes costing above P30.

The DOF's version of the bill also states that the rates will be automatically increased every two years to factor in inflation.

More 'fattening' habits

Part III

WELL AND GOOD

Fleta Ann

READ nutrition labels carefully

A serving size is not how much you put on your plate or bowl as in "first serving extra-cheesy and saucy." You have to read the nutrition label to find out what one serving contains of (for example, a package of 12 cookies might define one serving as three cookies or six cookies.

You also need to take a close look at the number of servings per container if you intend to eat a whole package. If the product has 90 calories per serving and it contains four servings, the whole package is equal to 360 calories. If you aren't aware of the serving size and the number of servings, you could be eating the whole pack thinking you have only consumed 90 calories when you have actually taken in 360.

If you are weight-conscious, advertising blurbs like calorie-reduced, zombie, low-carb, cholesterol-free and the well-nerdy catch your attention. Again, look at the label and find out how many calories there are. Don't go into calorie denial/mode and just rely on the fact that the product is "low carb" or "fat-free."

Also, be aware that the words "all natural" have no bearing on the calories of the product. They only mean that the ingredients are not highly processed and there are no artificial flavors or preservatives. A honey-roasted granola bar is a healthy natural snack but it is by no means low in calories.

'Super size me'

If watching the award-winning documentary "Super Size Me" made you never want to eat a super-sized portion of anything again, then you have learned a valuable lesson. Eating gigantic portions is one of the reasons America has seen a dramatic increase in obesity rates in the last two decades.

Research has clearly shown that people who are given larger than normal portions will lose track of how much they are actually eating. Consumer psychologist Brian Wansink says we need stand-out to control so that we have cut on enough. When we are served ever large portions, we can't tell that we have already eaten more than we are normally used to because there is still a lot of food left on the plate.

Super-sized portions may be alarming for your wallet because they usually cost just a little more than regular sized portions, but they are definitely alarming to your waistline. If you want to keep your weight under control, remember what nutritionist Marion Nestle of New York University said: "Super-sized portions are cream puff-sized people."

Grazing

Grazing or eating six mini-meals a day can be a good or bad habit for weight control. It all depends on how you go about it. The rationale behind this concept is based on the "thermic effect" of food. Simply put, there is an increase in body temperature whenever you eat. This means that the body burns calories to digest the food you have eaten. So the more frequently you eat, the more calories you burn.

Eating this way can help older women burn calories like a woman in her 20s. A study found that when women in their 50s and 60s were given small meals consisting of 200- to 300-calories, they burned as much fat as younger women. But when they were given 1,000-calorie meals, they burned 50 percent less fat.

So no matter your age or gender, it makes sense to spread out your calories into five or six meals rather than have three up mess meals or three big meals so that you can take advantage of the thermic effect of food.

However, this advice does not always work for everyone and, in fact, can even be the very reason some people can't lose weight.

I know someone who equated feeling full with getting fat. She believed that if she ate small quantities of food at a time, she wouldn't gain weight. But instead of eating six small nutritious meals a day, she was snacking almost every hour on food that was easy to carry and eat with her fingers—mainly things like bread and dry cereal. The thought (here were "safe" foods because they had almost zero fat. Not only was her diet unbalanced (too much carbohydrates and too little of everything else), she couldn't keep track of how much she was actually eating because she never felt full.

If you want to graze the right way, you need to plan carefully your small meals in advance so that you get the right amounts of nutrients and you don't go overboard grazing on whatever happens to be around like vending machine snacks and other high-calorie junk food.

Feeding the stomach not the heart

Weight loss experts say there are two types of hunger—physical and emotional. When we are physically hungry, our body sends us signals telling us we should look for food. The signals or "internal hunger cues" are a rumbling stomach, an "empty" feeling, lightheadedness, irritability, dizziness and decreased attention span.

Emotional hunger, on the other hand, leads to eating because you are sad, happy, depressed, angry, bored, anxious or stressed. It can start in childhood when your mom or papa would quiet your tears or reinforce a happy occasion with ice cream or a chocolate bar. You learn to associate the sensation of eating and the pleasure it gives you with emotional ups and downs.

Habitually using food as an emotional coping mechanism will not only make you fat, it can also keep you from confronting the real problems in your life. In her book, "It Substances Called Food," psychotherapist Gloria Arenson writes: "The more we abuse food and use it as a tranquilizer, the more we learn to live in a state of denial. We turn out, turn away, tend and forget the underlying problem. Finally we forget we have forgotten and blame our weight and eating habits for everything that's gone wrong in our lives."

Visit www.fleteannfitness.info

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

V-sit bend and straighten

THIS yoga and Pilates-inspired exercise strengthens the abs and quadriceps (front of the thighs) as well as stretches the hamstrings (back of the thighs).

Equipment:
Exercise mat
Exercise technique:
1. Sit with knees bent and butt straight.
2. Lean back and balance on buttocks as you bring knees up. Hold behind the thighs.
3. Contract muscles in the front of the thighs as you straighten your legs.
4. Bend and straighten legs for the desired number of repetitions.

Performance tips:
1. Ideally, both your back and your legs should be straight as you perform the exercise to the 9:45 position. If you can't do both, emphasize a straight back instead of straight legs. Avoid rounding your back to achieve straighter legs.
2. To make the exercise easier, bend and straighten one leg at a time.

Repetitions:
Do five to 10 repetitions.

TDP photographer Patrick Uy and wife Evelyn with Ramona Suarez and Marlon Lim

MISS of the tour Joana Manahan, curator of the exhibit, with Chito Vijandre and Nicky Toledo of Firma

WOMEN Kol sa'ya Marlyn Mercado and Lolit Tan Elan

BUSINESSMAN Mundy Edrique and his daughter Alexandra

ALL in the family: the Manahan clan—Edu, Jimia, Johnny and Lilianna

HAIR Ann and Francis Lumen with Lynette Mabes

JOHNNY Pelaquen

5 fab affairs in one evening

I WOKE up on Thursday, wondering what I would do with myself that evening. I had few invitations to various affairs and choosing one was like giving up my favorite yeasty grilled tongue sandwich at Dai Shoe. No matter. It's natural something chez, err le vie—dilutes?

The earliest happening was the chic opening of the art exhibit called Sun Carpet at Mezzanine 3, with cool, tall, beautiful Joana Elvira Manahan, granddaughter of the divine late Elvira Manahan, in curator (fly tacket) mode. Her collection of Joana was from a newspaper feature when she was 14 years young. She dyed her long hair in shocking flamingo pink and wore her own brand of Che-tarded fashion (but only a young lola with flaming pink hair would dare).

Well, siblings, now 21 years young, she has become a fab mannequin 1/9 serious art history student in London. She reminds me of her stunning cousin, the elegant Antonette Taus. Joana wore tresses her hair in in-one-and-out. For the opening cocktails she wore a chic chiffon number in powder pink and lime green by imaginative, talented mannequin Albert Enbi, to boot.

Fab new makers Chito Vijandre and Nicky Rolindo of the high-end, one-of-a-kind Firma Mezzo, were Joana's co-promoters. They emphasized the less chi-chi pink and gorgeous eye-catching aqua at the lobby this evening.

The customers serious artistas, dressed with topknots and garbanzo, were the scene of a scrumptious buffet spread. Since it is the millennium answer Bambi Cuhio, serving up her canapes.

With good food comes interesting conversation to surround-up on how a brave mestiz crowd discussing the merits of such painting by five artists Joana chose to exhibit. The works of Ronald Ventura, Gerd Dionisio, Bibi de Leon, Rafael del Casal and Rambo, were, as Joana states in her curatorial notes, indeed an object "in draftsmanship and characterization the theme of the body." It was definitely fun for me to decide which style I preferred. Either me, palanggas, each one had its own distinctive appeal and that contributed to the juicy conversation in between mouthfuls of yummy food.

Mundy Edrique was seen cheering between two Ventura works. A "sold" sticker was next beside one of RM de Leon's works, as well as Del Casal's drawings. Smiling, works were carefully scrutinized by interior designer, southern gent Jonathan Mann. He discussed the works with Tats Manahan. When I asked which of the artists' works they preferred, the Firma Mi duo Chito V. and Nicky T. shrieked: "All!"

I was told Joana's father Johnny helped her set up the punch and hang the paintings, while mother Tats and younger sister Lilliana took charge of other little details, like making sure enamored and cold airplers were in glass, natch! Other Manahan family members were all too visible. With the heavy show-biz connections of Johnny Manahan, I wondered at the conspicuous absence of show-biz folk, except for Ai-Ai de las Alas, who dashed in late-ish, and Johnny's pals from way back, Leo and Krista MacNeil, who beamed at with their nephew, Gary V.'s son, Paulo Valenzuela.

So, without having to embark, we can say this was a real fumilik affair. A hulo? It was a smashing opening for a show that was exclusively pal-napalmic palangges.

Don't say "Sus Largo or the Governor's lobby until Sept. 30.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Historical Photos by Alex Van Haagen on Kodak Max

QUEENS two—Liliana and Joana—with Paolo Valenzuela and JB Ponce Enrile

HOTSHOTS at the International Modeling and Talent Convention: Arlene Padjan, director, JBP Kosmos; Marnie Padilla-Catoia, international director, JBP Manila, and Willie Ninja, runway guru

LIMBOVE: Model Karen Agustin, off to Milan; (right) Kevin Gladys Cruz was third runner-up in a recent competition abroad

THE GIRL and the guimaras: Joana Manahan with artists Ronald Ventura, Rafael del Casal, Bruhn, RM de Leon and Gerd Dionisio

WOW party

It was party time and party hard they did, those pals known as the Women of Wild Wines (WOW). Gowing together at the Sun Onion Bar and Bistro, the young, beautiful and hip ladies celebrated the grand launching of their newest bar mate, Wild Vines Little World's single-serve 250 ml bottle.

"Wild Vines Lasting Virgin" was an exhilarating happening, introduced that evening were Wild Vines Little Buddies in Blackberry Merlot, the cool Peach Chardonnay and, the latest addition to the deliciously intoxicating pussy set, Blueberry Cabernet Sauvignon.

Since it was ladies night, many hunkymacho and not so macho celebrated the women's every need, palanggas, with pleasure, if I may add. Hot DJ Monster Radio jocks Beam and Penn hosted the program. The games began with the women joining "The Bachelor Game." Their wanted Prince Bon, gorgeous hunk Geoff Rodriguez, with their sharp wits and feminine charm. Needless to say, greatly food wanted to date the stud, but there could only be one winner.

Rounds go buzzing to the sounds of M Groove Band rocked the floor. Others went for the lance and body paint-ng, henna tattoo-ng applications and enticements of what make a woman WOW! The whole shebang was broadcast live over Monster Radio DZ 93.1, no less.

The Women of Wild Vines had a blast welcoming the newest party recruited—Wild Vines Little Buddies, darlings.

NEWCY Hurel and Revision Inc.'s PR wiggle Bhong Lorentes, Becker Customary and Alex Gloria

WORLD beaper president Nancy Bacon

QUIPP Rodriguez wears the new Wild Vines Little Buddy

Bringing home the bacon

That supermarket achiever, Marivic Dulla-Cataldo, had lots of happy news when I touched base last, palanggas. Among the new is the beehive executive director of John Robert Powers international, no less. She said the three models she brought to the International Modeling and Talent Convention in New York came home winners. Ms. Filipina Overseas 2004, now ranching Karen Lorenz Agustin, was second runner-up in Female Model of the Year, and got a modeling contract this month in Milan.

The "New York, New York 2004" at the posh New York Hilton gathered talents and models from Canada, Mexico, Europe, Asia and the United States, with their talent scouts.

Another of our gals, sweet Blaidyn Cruz, was third runner-up in the make-up and jeans competition and honorable mention in swimwear like sweetest wine cullbacks, no less. Boardroster Francois Fillmore, 6'3", got a contract from Bob Cruz Modeling Management in New York.

Now that's the John Robert Powers way, darlings.

Marivic herself received the first award at a gathering of JRP directors from various cities in the United States, that included Arlene Padjan from JBP Kosmos, who was ever so visible. Hey, this is the second time that the humble JRP unit in New York came out winners. Last year, Cassie Wong and Ronald Mercado also won top prizes and got local modeling contracts.

I was told that JRP founder president and CEO, Richard Epstein, is about to open the 13th branch of John Robert Powers in Asia, this time, in Taipei! Hot bod, huh?

E&J Galle's sales director Andy Hicks, product manager Lloyd Dizon, Vino'Kross, managing director for international brands of the Andresen Group, local distributor of Wild Vines, E&J Galle's marketing executive Katherine Lee, marketing manager Loreto Lee and marketing director Tomo Kuono

THE HUMBLE that got the gals sipping the so-cool Wild Vines Blueberry, Peach and Blueberry

THE WOMEN of Wild Vines pose with RX and Jacks Bisera and Ruiz.

Natural first-aid remedies

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

There is a wealth of natural remedies in the world's forests, and even in our backyards—and along with them, an equally generous supply of natural goodness. Let's take a closer look at some of these, in order or at least manage our everyday health and life.

What's the cure for dizziness?

This is not a condition but a symptom. Causes could be high/low blood pressure, overstressed adrenals, low blood sugar (hunger pangs), anemia, B-12 deficiency, flu, colds, natural reaction to medication, shock, fear or emotional stress.

See your doctor immediately. However, a little help can come from: apple cider vinegar/apple or grape juice (1 oz. of any of these diluted in warm water). It balances electrolytes and blood sugar, and aids in getting the stomach settled.

- Sage—Especially good for nerves, as tea.
- Honey/basil candy—Stabilizes this slowly for children low blood sugar problem.
- Cloves—Best for nerves, as tea. Place 1 tsp of vegetable/whole cloves (crushed) in a pint of water. Strain. Add honey.
- Garlic—This regulates blood pressure and aids sterilization. Mix ½ tbsp fresh garlic in a cup of hot water. Take as tea.

Can you recommend a good skin regimen to combat rashes?

Physicians often have difficulty diagnosing skin rashes, which can be caused by a myriad of things—allergies, psoriasis, scabies (skin mite), fungus, nervousness or emotional disturbances like worries, anger, etc. Eliminate substances that might have caused the rash—soaps, perfumes, synthetic fabrics, jewelry, lotions, certain foods (chicken, shrimp, chocolate, etc.).

Try relaxation therapy if you have been tense lately (massage, yoga, meditation). Wash the affected area. Apply the following:

- Aloe vera (salida)—A general all-rash treatment. If fresh, peel off the skin, use the fleshy gel and rub on the affected area. Mix some gel (1 tsp) with water and drink as a tonic.
- Apple cider vinegar—Apply on the skin one to two times daily. Take ½ tsp in a cup of warm water, twice daily.
- Baking soda—Soothes itchiness. Mix 1 tbsp in 2 tsp of water to make a paste.
- Virgin coconut oil/avocado oil—Antiseptic and antibacterial. Massage on the affected area.
- Celery—Eat two fresh stalks or make a glass of juice. Drink when nervous.
- Oatmeal—Cook 2 cups in water. Apply warm on the skin. Leave on for 15 minutes.
- Vitamin A (10,000 IU), D (200-400 IU), E (200-400 IU)—Take one tablet daily; then administer the contents of one capsule and apply on the affected area.
- Sauk bath—In a tub of very warm water, mix a handful of assorted herbs: Mint, basil, oregano, etc. Add flowers like jasmine, sampaguita and sauk for five minutes. (Optional: Add 1 cup baking soda, aloe vera or apple cider vinegar.)

How do I manage my peptic ulcers?

Peptic ulcer usually appears either in the stomach (gastric) or small intestine (duodenal). A burning pain is often felt one hour after eating.

If the pain persists, see your physician ASAP. Improve your diet immediately. Eliminate fats, oils, alcohol and heavy meats. Eat more vegetables, fruits, broths. Drink more water. Reduce or manage your worries. Stop smoking and drinking aspirin. Check food allergies or abdominal bacterial infection.

- Aloe vera plant—Drink in puree form, diluted with water.
- Cabbage—4 oz/5 oz, thrice daily.
- Baking soda—As an antacid, ¼ tsp in a cup of warm water. Works immediately.
- Cayenne—¼ tsp in a cup of hot tea or water. Don't worry, this bitter astringent will not irritate your stomach lining. If any burning sensation is felt, eat a small box of raisins to cool your down.

Depression is my biggest problem. What do I do?

Everyone sometimes suffers from depression. No body is immune to it. However, know that it is considered as a defense wrote attributes that are frustrating and beyond your control. Withdrawal from life and all its pressures is a good thing—but only for short periods. You may experience loss of appetite, difficulty in concentrating/thinking, low libido/energy or feeling of hopelessness/worthlessness. With a little time off, you can fight it. However, if you have suicidal tendencies, see your therapist immediately.

Talking is the best form of therapy. Talk it out with the person you have a problem with. Keep busy. Cry it out.

- Exercise—Get physical. Write in your journal.
- Chamomile, sage, peppermint, rose, catnip—Brew a pot. Sip 5 cups in a day.
- Honey/nicotine—If depression is due to low sugar, take 1 tsp immediately.
- Valerian root—Take it as a tea, twice daily.
- St. John's Wort—Great relaxant.
- Red raspberry/motherwort—Balances hormones while relaxing you.

Spa treatments to make you feel pampered are wonderful for total well-being.

Love and light!

Were the fairy photos faked?

INNER AWAKENING

Jaime T. Licauco

Two readers pointed out, reacting to my column last week, that the two British girls who took the Cottingley photos of the fairies in 1917 and 1920 later confessed to have faked them.

Liz Montes-Castillo, a marketing officer, wrote: "I read somewhere when the girls were grown up, that they admitted they used cutouts for fairies in their pictures because their parents didn't believe them. I have seen the pictures the girls took in a book I read a long time ago, and I can't believe people thought them to be authentic. The fairies were fake-looking. There was even one picture where the supposed fairy was wearing a dress that was in fashion during that time, with hat and all. I believe in fairies, but I think the pictures referred to in your column were fake."

Another reader, who calls himself Jepoy Still, said my story of the Cottingley photos was not complete because "you did not state that the two girls actually confessed in 1981 that they faked the fairies by cutting them out of a book entitled 'Princess Mary's Gift Book,' published in 1915.

"You may look at this site to prove the authenticity of my research, http://www.otterlimousines.com/photos/cottingley.html.

Facts and nothing but

"Maybe you have already taken a look at it, but whatever your interaction [were is] not invalidating the confession made by the two girls, you still have to make a closer inquiry by completing the story. As readers, we expect that you, sir, should provide us complete and unprofessionalize fact, or even just more fact."

I agree completely that we should at least have the basic facts in a given story, but what are the real facts in this case? I did mention in my column last week that not everybody believed in the authenticity of the Cottingley fairies' photos and even entertained the reasons why.

I am aware of the so-called "confession" of fakery the two Cottingley girls allegedly made later in their lives. Why it took them so long to confess is something to think about. Why is it that people are more easily persuaded to believe that a paranormal phenomenon is false rather than authentic?

The information that still cited came from critics who did not believe at all in fairies, or in any paranormal phenomenon. No matter what evidence one presents, it will be shot down as unacceptable or not valid. Notice the way Still ignored completely the statements of Conan Doyle, Gardner, Hodson and the photo experts saying the photos were authentic.

He relied solely on the dubious statements from the internet, whose attributes one can hardly trace or validate. On the other hand, in a book on the supernatural published by Gruber Enterprises, where I based my story, author Daniel Farson said: "Gardner pointed to a piece of evidence that emerged quite unexpectedly a year after Conan Doyle's article [about the fairies]. A friend of Frances Griffiths in South Africa produced a copy of the first fairy photograph, which Frances had sent to her in a letter in 1917. Not only was this several years before the case was taken up publicly by Conan Doyle, but also, Frances' letter dismisses the fairies in a single, offhand phrase amidst gossip about her dolls, her parents and another photo of herself.

"This backs up Gardner's contention that, for Frances Griffiths, there was nothing extraordinary about seeing fairies and that as Elsie Wright had told him, Frances had stood straight at the camera because she was far more interested in having her own photo taken than in fairies she could see any day... As for the three-typical looking fairies, Geoffrey realizes maintained that fairies often choose to materialize in the forms that presence or children have thought up for them, or in some image they particularly admire. 'The surprise,' he says, 'would be if they were different.'"

In conclusion, Daniel Farson said: "In spite of the overwhelming publicity, which the Wrights outlid not in the end escape, no one ever convincingly disproved the fairy photographs. If the photographs were fraudulent, then the Wright family—or someone—apparently possessed a photographic genius that fooled every expert."

A similar thing happened in the case of the Fox sisters in New York, whose communication with the dead through knocks and rappings in their house in Hydesville, New York in 1848 gave birth to the spiritualist movement in the West.

Margaret Fox was 10 when the strange rappings were heard in their house. Sister Kate was 7 and Leah was much older. Leah became the first professional medium when spiritualism was established. Then the relationship between Leah and her younger sisters arrived. When Margaret was left in poverty and sickness, she got revenge of the same stonewall Leah. So in 1888 she publicly confessed that the rappings were faked by them. She said she and Kate developed control over their joints and muscles, that they could produce the sounds without detection, even demonstrating how they did it.

But the sessions they held could not be explained as mere trickery. So spiritualism still grew despite her claim, which was never really proven. So there you are.

E-mail reactions to this column to jlicauco@email.com.ph. Listen to my radio program, 7-8 p.m. every Sunday over DZRH at 666 kHz on the AM radio band.

Hollywood head-turners

THE REVOLUTIONARY Tigi Bed Head Stick, actress Meg Ryan's secret behind her spiky-edged finished-unfinished look, is no longer a secret.

Since celebrity hairstylist Anthony Mascolo launched this one product in the late 1990s, he has developed a variety of hair miracle workers. And in addition to the Head Stick, the Tigi Bed Head line have become the hottest hair care, treatment and styling range in Hollywood and the biggest market today.

Singing sensation Anastacia absolutely loves the Control Freak Shampoo, Conditioner and Resistance leave-in-her solid slider and finishes the job with Power Trip, a molding hair gel that adds dimension and volume.

Among the shampoos and conditioners, popular favorites include the Dumb Blonde used by Britney Spears and Tera Banks because it is best for after highlights, damaged or chemically-treated hair.

Still disturbed, a range vitamin formulation to preserve shine and volume, is preferred by Maroon 5 frontman Mariou, a rich and creamy lathering infused with a citrusy fresh smell is used by American Pie star Shannon Elizabeth and the legendary Lenny Kravitz.

Tigi Bed Head also has a range of hair treatments such as the Head Me Right, a peppermint hair mask that provides the hair with a five-minute spa treatment that stimulates and conditions the hair for a full and shiny look; Tigi Bleach, a split-end remedy and leave-in conditioner that protects dry and damaged hair from environmental elements while giving that frosty and lively tinge.

The ones shine brighter with Tigi Bed Head's impressive array of shine enhancers and smoothers. Natalie Portman's choice? Girl Fuel, a lightweight shine serum that smoothens dry ends. Other popular choices are Kelly Ripa's personal fave Shine Junkie, a non-greasy super-shine formula that contains jojoba oils.

Drink the "do with a Bed Head Bar Assisted mani-heave by Ewan McGregor, Liza Minelli, Sex Spelling, Sharon Stone, Robbie Williams, Justin Timberlake, Enrique Iglesias—Bed Head Stick for texture and hold, the Maharah Gel for ultra spiking hold, Mascara Out for maximum strength, the thermal blow dry miracle Serious Superstar and the Manipulator which is used to spike.

The Tigi Bed Head line offers shampoos, conditioners, treatments, shine enhancers and smoothers, gel and waxes, hair sprays, and a wide variety of styling aids.

Tigi Bed Head is exclusively distributed by Shamsunny Inc. and available in all leading salons.

BEYONCE Knowles' locks are courtesy of Headtrick, a shine adrenaline-enhancer with a superfine resin that provides for safe, shiny and silky hair for any length or texture.

PARTY girl Paris Hilton uses After Party, a hair-shiller that tames funky flyaways.

OSCAR winner Charlize Theron swears by the Tigi Bed Head Rubber Rage, a strong hair wax for a shiny and textured finish.